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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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DECEMBER 20, 1993

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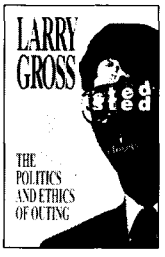

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CORRESPONDENCE

The deviant

To the editors:

I'm no fan of Katie Roiphe's *The Morning After: Sex, Fear and Feminism on Campus.* Still, I was amazed that Charles Krauthammer could parallel her work so closely without even mentioning her name ("Defining Deviancy Up," November 22). Think about it: he misuses the same quotations from Susan Estrich and Naomi Wolf; relies on the same article by Neil Gilbert (virtually the only social scientist in America who thinks the FBI Uniform Crime Reports offer an accurate picture of rape); offers the same mischaracterizations of Dr. Mary Koss's research. Like Roiphe, too, he ignores the many studies that find high rates of acquaintance rape while using narrow traditional definitions (force or threat of force, and only penetration counts); failed to interview anyone who disagrees with him; tars all feminists concerned with rape with the Dworkin-MacKinnonite brush; and seems to think women have no right to object to callous male behavior that is not actually felonious.

Surely credit—or discredit—should go where it's due. I can only surmise that, since Roiphe's facts and arguments have been seriously challenged, Krauthammer wished to put them forward without having to acknowledge—or answer—the case against them.

KATHA POLLITT
New York, New York

To the editors:

Perhaps most striking in Charles Krauthammer's remarks on deviancy is the implication that any effort to point out inequities within or, indeed, to sustain family configurations different from "the ordinary middle-class family" constitutes a conspiratorial "project" of "moral equivalency" somehow akin to "Soviet" sympathizing. Besides the tenuous logic underlying Krauthammer's cold war-style wolf-crying, here is the presumption that moral equivalency, especially when bestowed on different kinds of families, is a self-evident evil, threatening to throw the kingdom into chaos.

Yet such chaos may itself be a by-product of Krauthammer's own value system, where certain family structures reign superior by virtue of their form alone. For, if families attain a moral ranking not by sheer "ordinariness" or congruency to some preconceived ideal, but rather by their capacity to provide support and their propensity for fostering just relationships, then Krauthammer's categories for deviant and normal might very well have to be totally overhauled if not discredited altogether.

HANS JOHNSON
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:

Charles Krauthammer writes with evident regret of the good old days when homosexuality was considered an indication of "deviancy." Today, he writes, homosexuality "has been declared a simple lifestyle choice."

Actually, the cliché "lifestyle choice" has been used almost entirely by conservatives in an effort to deny evidence that homosexual orientation is innate. Properly speaking, the issue of "choice" only arises when one is faced with the question of what to do about one's sexual orientation. In the past, gays and lesbians often chose to conform to social norms by participating in sham, loveless heterosexual affairs and silently enduring fag jokes from their friends and colleagues. Unlike the matter of sexual orientation, these decisions to conform outwardly did indeed constitute "lifestyle choices"—choices that were dishonest, degrading and immoral. Today, gays and lesbians have better choices available.

As a "retired psychiatrist," Krauthammer should know that outward deviancy from social norms does not in all cases indicate a pathology; nor does silent conformity indicate that all is well.

MARK E. PIETRZYK
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:

Were it not for the skewed chronology, I would be convinced that the U.S. Senate had set about proving Charles Krauthammer's thesis in "Defining Deviancy Up." No more telling proof of Krauthammer's contention can be found than the charade performed recently on Capitol Hill. As major crime legislation languished on the sidelines, the full Senate debated for two days over whether or not to subpoena Bob Packwood's diaries. That, in order to further the maniacal investigation into accusations that the Oregon Republican was an overzealous, if inept, womanizer.

Ah, yes! There was also the possibility of criminal misconduct. It seems Senator Packwood at one point may have wandered beyond the accepted bounds of nepotism by giving his wife a job. Gee, if that's a crime worthy of the Senate's scrutiny, pinch me.

And let's remember: as Senators Bryan, Biden, et al. relished their desultory remarks on the importance of rooting out one imagined deviant, serious legislation on how to handle the tens of

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thousands of genuine deviants roaming this country lay neglected.

TREVOR NELSON
Boston, Massachusetts

Baumol's error

To the editors:

"Baumol's disease" of low or nil productivity growth in services has little relevance to America's health care problems, despite its eponymous inventor's elegant claim to the contrary ("Do Health Care Costs Matter?" by William J. Baumol, November 22). On a matter of fact, most European countries have brought health care costs as a proportion of GDP under control in the past decade: the United States is alone in seeing a continuing rapid increase. Not unconnectedly, it is also alone in leaving the financing of health care largely to private insurance.

A proper measure of productivity would anyway surely show an extraordinarily fast rise, not a stagnation, in health care. Lots of diseases that were untreatable have become treatable; technical progress has galloped ahead; previously unheard-of drugs and operating techniques have become normal. By any reasonable definition, output per head has soared—quite possibly as fast as in manufacturing. Among public services, education and welfare are much better candidates for Baumol's disease, yet their share of GDP is not rising.

Of course "output" is a slippery concept in health care (as it is in other services—one reason that so much nonsense is talked about service productivity). That is, however, a big reason to worry about rising spending. Consumers of health care presumably want better health; yet the link between the two is tenuous at best. If you look at life expectancy, infant mortality or morbidity rates, Americans seem to be less healthy than many Europeans—which suggests that the country's health spending offers pretty poor value for money.

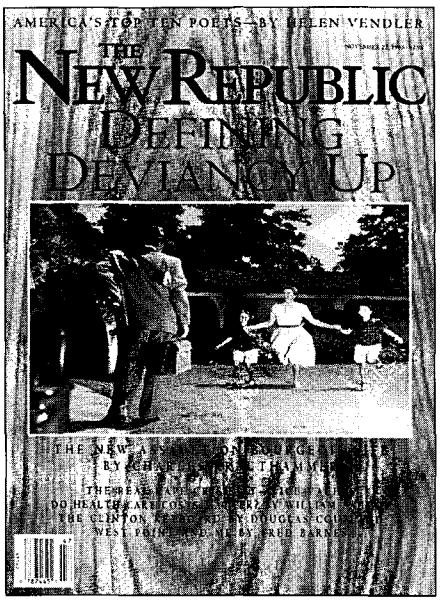
That reinforces a wider concern: about the opportunity cost of health spending. This takes two forms. One is lower wages. International competition limits the amount that big firms can spend on labor costs without going out of business; so when health care takes a bigger chunk of those costs, wages suffer. This is a big explanation for America's paradoxical combination of respectable economic growth with stagnant real incomes in the 1980s. The second concerns public spending. Both state and federal budgets have been relentlessly squeezed by the growth of Medicare and Medicaid, forcing off-setting cuts in other programs—including education and welfare. Whatever the defects in the Clinton health care plan, the notion that America can afford to stick to its present mess even if health costs absorb 35 percent of GDP is dangerous nonsense.

JOHN PEET
London, England

Going to Florida

To the editors:

Michael Kinsley says it's not hypocritical for opponents of school choice to send their kids to private schools ("Picky, Picky," TRB, November 15). After all, Kinsley asks, would it be hypocritical for someone who "chose" a vacation in Florida to oppose a government program that would provide the poor with the same choice?



No, it wouldn't be. But people who vacation in Florida don't generally claim that everyone else should be guaranteed the same opportunity. Most opponents of school choice, though, do claim that all children should have the opportunity to receive a good education. Their hypocrisy consists in effectively denying this opportunity, by opposing a policy (choice) that would allow poor children to escape the awful schools they would never allow their own children to attend.

Choice opponents who keep their kids out of public schools are also hypocritical in a second way. One of the main arguments for public schools is that they promote the mixing of children of all races and social classes. If that's so, and if mixing is good, then isn't it a little hypocritical for the Clintons to leave all the mixing to the children of others?

IRA CARNAHAN
Executive Editor, The Public Interest
Washington, D.C.

Helpful suggestions

To the editors:

Your editorial against double jeopardy "civil rights" prosecutions ("In Jeopardy," November 15) raises the question: Could another way have been found to prosecute KKK terrorists in the early 1960s?

Two approaches might have worked: (*a*) pre-emption—up until some point before a state trial gets sent to the jury, give the federal government the right to pre-empt prosecution, forcing an immediate dismissal of charges at the state level; (*b*) wergild—if federal authorities decide that a community connived with a killer (e.g., by acquitting him in the face of overwhelming evidence), allow the victim's survivors to sue said community in federal court for wrongful death. Of course, the defendant community should have the opportunity to present the same evidence to the federal jury that might have explained the original unexpected acquittal (e.g., that the deceased was a criminal and most jurors would feel "good riddance").

HUGO S. CUNNINGHAM
Boston, Massachusetts

Family value

To the editors:

Slavenka Drakulić's article about the death of my cousin, Bosko Brkic, and his Bosnian Muslim girlfriend, Admira, last May in Sarajevo, revived painful memories ("Love Story," October 25). Your readers may be interested to know that Bosko's mother is from Krajina. His grandfather was murdered in cold blood by Croat Ustashe at the beginning of the Second World War. Most of Bosko's great uncles and aunts joined the Serbian Chetnik uprising against the Nazi-backed Ustashe genocide of Serbs and Jews. Many of his relatives who survived the war became refugees and settled in Canada.

In September 1991 Bosko's grandmother fled Croatia after Croat extremists burned down her house. The same house had been burned down by Croat Ustashe in 1941 and rebuilt after the war.

Despite such a tragic background, Bosko refused to succumb to the nationalism that has swept across Yugoslavia. Unfortunately, extremists in Sarajevo impelled him to attempt his fateful escape to Bosnian Serb territory. The horrible murder of Bosko and Admira by Muslim snipers has come to symbolize the demise of the Yugoslav ideal.

GEORGE TINTOR
London, England

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FROM WASHINGTON

The people's choice

> Mr. Pines said, however, that while many would call the channel's politics conservative, he prefers the term "populist." He said the channel would ... welcome Republicans and Democrats alike who believe in "less government."

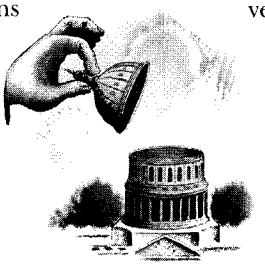
That is Burton Yale Pines, quoted in *The New York Times*. Pines is one of the founders of something called "National Empowerment Television," a new cable channel being bankrolled by the Free Congress Foundation—a conservative organization by anyone's standards. The channel will feature a weekly Newt Gingrich show, among other delights of the right.

It's heartwarming, I suppose, that conservatives now feel the need to mask their true ideological identity in euphemisms. In the 1980s liberals often resorted to euphemisms like "progressive" to avoid being tarred with the L-word, which is still considered politically disadvantageous. In the 1930s a "progressive" was someone who didn't want to admit to being a Communist. Now it's someone who doesn't want to admit to being a liberal. Is that "progress"? I'm not sure. But at least conservatives have had to start playing the same game.

Today, "populist" is the self-label of choice across the political spectrum. Earlier associations with racist demagoguery have been forgotten. Conservatives claim it, liberals claim it. Commentators see a fearsome new "populist" coalition emerging from opposition to NAFTA. Hewlett-Packard even advertises one of its computer printers with the headline "POPULIST," on the grounds that it "has brought high-quality color and black and white printing to the people." But what does the term mean?

Pines is confused if he thinks that there is any obvious connection between "populism" and "less government." The founding document of American populism—the People's Party Platform of 1892—called for a graduated income tax and government ownership of the railroads and the telegraph and telephone systems. "We believe that the powers of government—in other words, of the people—should be expanded ... to the end that oppression, injustice and poverty shall eventually cease in the land," declared the original populists. Talk like that gets you branded a liberal elitist, or worse, these days.

The most classically populist item on any major political agenda in recent years was President Clinton's hefty tax increase on the rich. Second might be Hillary Rodham Clinton's attacks on the pharmaceutical and insurance industries. Yet many of the conservative types who preen as "populist"—Gingrich and his congressional GOP cohorts, Rush Limbaugh, *The Wall Street Journal* editorial page—not only oppose these Clinton agendas but do so in classically anti-populist terms. They accuse the Clintons of stirring up "envy," "divisiveness," "class hatred" and so on.



On NAFTA, the self-anointed conservative populists were split. Gingrich and Limbaugh supported the agreement. *The Wall Street Journal* sputtered with rage at opponents of the pact (an "alliance against progress," it labeled them) for promoting the sort of irrational resentment against "elites" that the *Journal* itself ordinarily promotes with such relish.

In today's political discourse, "populist" often means nothing more than "popular." It is a form of democratic bullying—a claim to speak for a majority of the people. As an ideology, this is pretty empty. If all you mean by calling yourself a "populist" is that you believe the will of the majority should carry the day, you are not distinguishing yourself from anyone else in this democracy. We all think that. If what you mean is that your own particular views are held by the majority, you may or may not be correct. Opponents of NAFTA, for example, never had a majority behind them.

To the extent "populism" means more than "democracy" itself, it has traditionally been associated with notions of direct majority rule, as opposed to the various filters and constraints of constitutional, representative government. But the two biggest procedural items on today's so-called populist agenda are term limits and the balanced budget amendment. Both of these would place new constraints on democratic decision-making.

Of course populism has always defined itself in opposition to some sort of "elite," which supposedly is thwarting the popular will. Self-styled conservative populists would say it's only natural, given the way power has shifted in American society over the past century, that populist ire should be directed today at Washington rather than Wall Street, at big government rather than big capital.

But today's popular animus against big government is highly qualified. People are widely opposed to taxes, but they are not opposed to the benefits those taxes—partly—pay for. And the "populist" issue du jour right now is crime, with an agenda of more cops, more prisons, more executions. This may be wise or unwise, but it is a call for more government, not less.

Today's populism, like earlier versions, deserves to be treated with both respect and caution: respect, as it is to some extent a genuine expression of pain by those who are hurting economically; caution, because like earlier versions it can curdle into ugly scapegoating of cultural outsiders—immigrants, racial minorities, "liberals." But today's populism also deserves special suspicion of its own, for three reasons.

First, there is a huge phony element. Many of the noisiest purveyors of "populist" anger are themselves Chardonnay-sipping elitists. From inside the beltway, political consultants and commentators fan the flames of rage against "Washington," and get rich at it. From the "World Financial Center" in downtown Manhattan, *Wall Street Journal* editors join in the chorus. Populism has always involved demagoguery, of course, but the level of cynicism among promoters of the current version is especially high.

Second, the audience for today's aggrieved populist rhetoric is different. In *Voices of Protest*, his book about Father Coughlin and Huey Long, two populist voices of the 1930s, Professor Alan Brinkley notes that their audience was not the desperately poor, as in the 1890s, but "those on the fringes of the middle class [who had] gained a foothold in the world of bourgeois respectability." Today's populism has been ratcheted up the social scale once again. Aimed squarely at the heart of the middle class (and led by a billionaire!), it is broad enough to embrace virtually every American short of Donald Trump, and aims its shafts of resentment downward as much as upward.

Third, it is especially futile and self-defeating for today's American middle class to believe that its problems are the fault of someone else. That message may be nice to hear, but it is not the message we need to hear. Those who spread it are doing the country no favor.

MICHAEL KINSLEY

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

DECEMBER 20, 1993

THE IRISH SOLUTION

The least noticed event concerning Northern Ireland in the last couple of weeks was one of the most pertinent: the discovery of a huge shipment of arms on its way to Ulster from Eastern Europe. Valued at around $370,000, it was destined for the unionist paramilitary groups that are violently committed to Ulster's union with Britain. It signals a likely new surge in unionist violence after what has already been a heady year: on January 28 a unionist bomb killed a man in Cookstown; on February 3 the unionists executed a young Catholic in Armagh; on March 25 they killed five Catholics in Derry; on October 30 seven civilians drinking beer were killed in an attack on a pub. Before the gunmen opened fire, they declared, "trick or treat."

The unionist violence was not, of course, unreciprocated. On March 20 an IRA bomb in Warrington, England, injured fifty-four people and killed two children; on April 24 a bomb in the city of London went off, killing no one but costing hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage; on July 3 a 100-pound bomb exploded outside Strabane courthouse in Ulster; on October 23 ten civilians were killed in what became known as the Shankhill Road Massacre.

It turns out that this violence was far from random. It was timed exactly in response to a series of secret initiatives by the British government to establish formal links and talks with the IRA. As early as last February, according to the British, the Major government received messages from the republican terrorists that they wanted to end the conflict. In response, Prime Minister John Major's emissaries said that if the IRA would suspend violence, the government would be prepared to enter into direct talks with Sinn Fein, the group's political wing. But the British also reiterated the non-negotiable point that the final constitutional status of Northern Ireland could be decided only by a majority of voters in the province. For all the hysteria the talks have provoked since they were revealed last Sunday by the London *Observer*, Major acted as any sensible democratic leader should: he refused to make any concessions without a cessation of terrorism, but otherwise put himself at the disposal of his enemy's political negotiators.

But Major's flexibility begs an intriguing question: What is there to negotiate? Unlike the Palestinian-Israeli or Balkan conflicts, a rough-and-ready partition has already been constructed, giving the two communities a political unit each. Thanks to the Anglo-Irish agreement of 1985, Dublin already has a role in the governing of the northern province. Britain has explicitly stated its ambivalence toward Ulster's incorporation into the U.K. As Peter Brooke, the former Northern Ireland secretary, put it in 1990: "The British government has no selfish, strategic or economic interest in Northern Ireland: our role is to help, enable and encourage." The Republic of Ireland has recently shown itself prepared to amend those parts of its constitution that claim Ulster as its own territory—a position supported in polls by a slim majority of Irish voters. The British and Irish governments have established effective cooperation in the battle against terrorists of both sides; the constancy of the two governments, indeed, may be behind the IRA's decision to seek the best political deal now, before they finally become exhausted.

So what's left to argue about? The truth is: not much. Even the most pragmatic and sensible attempts at progress are met with the kind of violence we have seen this year. Any full-scale attempt to force Ulster into union with the republic would likely trigger a revival of unionist terrorism that would make the IRA's terror seem positively amateur. Even if a democratic majority emerges in Ulster to join with Ireland (thanks to faster Catholic birth rates), the existence of a bitterly hostile, and probably violent, unionist minority would remain. Unfortunately, there are some conflicts in which a breakthrough to "peace" is simply a chimera, in which the only progress is incremental, and ambitious plans to seek a grand solution simply intensify the violence. Ulster, we should know by now, is one of those conflicts. If the British and Irish premiers want the next year to be less bloody than this one, they would do well to realize it. •

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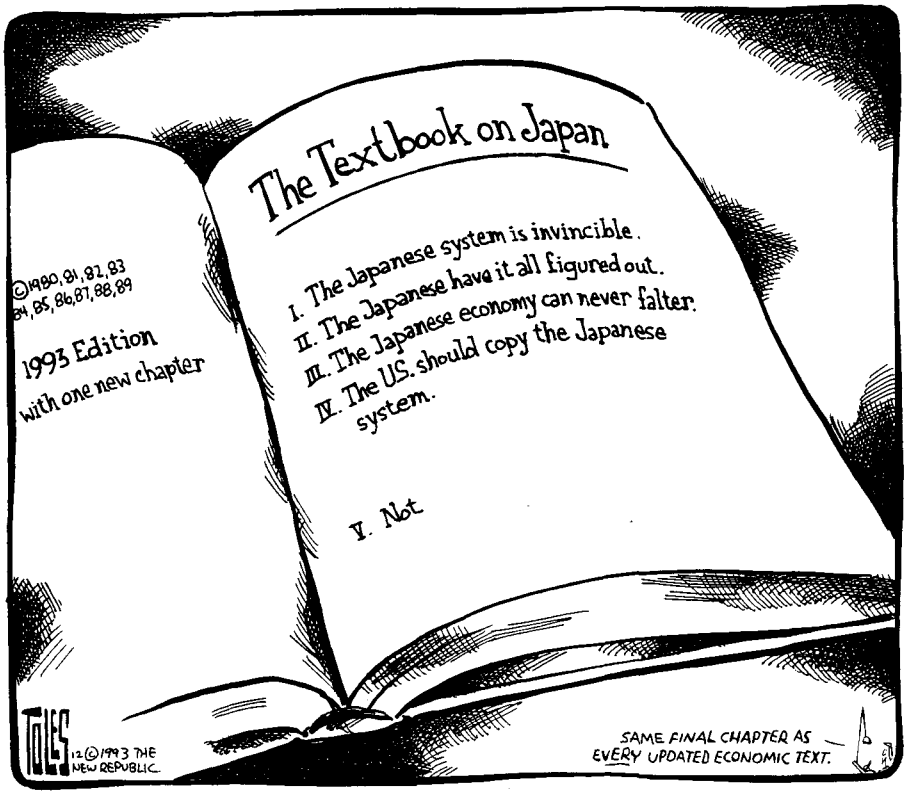
NOTEBOOK

STILL NOT INHALING: Sometimes, alas, Bill Clinton simply cannot help himself. Having taken a brave and important stand on a matter of principle, he is so mortified by the possibility that some people might be offended that he immediately feels compelled to apologize. This pattern of behavior couldn't have been more lamentably illustrated than in the Salman Rushdie affair. Last week, the president met with the author of *The Satanic Verses*, who had just been to see Secretary of State Warren Christopher and national security adviser Anthony Lake. It was a clear statement of the president's support of free speech, of the United States' horror at foreign governments' attempts to murder a Western citizen for something he has written. After the sad and tawdry behavior of the Bush administration toward Rushdie, the meeting came as a clear reminder of why we, among many others, were so eager to see Clinton elected. And then, a week later, the pathetic qualifications. The president may have met with Rushdie, but only for "a couple of minutes"; officials tell reporters that the encounter took place in a corridor and hardly constituted a "meeting"; moreover, the president says that "to be frank, there was some division among our people about whether I should see Mr. Rushdie when he was here." More ludicrously, an official informs *The Washington Post* that the reaction to Clinton's Rushdie meeting was "a little more intense than he [Clinton] thought, and I think he was kind of intrigued by it and reflecting a little bit on the symbolic power of the presidency." We suggest it's about time Clinton stop reflecting on the symbolic power of the presidency and start being president. Part of that is taking difficult stands on matters of principle—like the First Amendment—and sticking with them. He's begun to get the first part right. We look forward to his understanding the second.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I. The Japanese system is invincible.
II. The Japanese have it all figured out.
III. The Japanese economy can never falter.
IV. The U.S. should copy the Japanese system.
V. Not
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SAME FINAL CHAPTER AS EVERY UPDATED ECONOMIC TEXT.

AND A PENNY SAVED IS A PENNY EARNED: The latest issue of the conservative journal *Policy Review* fulminates against Justin Kaplan, editor of *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*, for deliberately muzzling conservative voices. "The sixteenth edition of *Bartlett's* contains only three entries from Ronald Reagan," frets editor Adam Meyerson. "But Mr. Kaplan's slighting of President Reagan is just the tip of the iceberg in his abuse of his cultural power." In the review's lead article, Meyerson breathlessly reveals "250 quotations censored from *Bartlett's*." Here's a sampling of the omitted aphorisms: "Education is, after all, a serious business."—William J. Bennett; "The successful leader does not talk down to people. He lifts them up."—Richard M. Nixon; "This administration's objective will be a healthy, vigorous, growing economy."—Ronald Reagan.

VOLE IN THE HAY: We have praised the prairie vole for its kind, familial and monogamous ways (see "Vole Models," Washington Diarist, November 29). Now comes more good news from the rodent front. According to *The New York Times*, the *meadow* vole actually stops mating if there are too many of its kind. That's right, the small, mouselike creature has a built-in population control mechanism. This trait is all the more admirable given the animal's short life span: with an average of three months on this earth, you would think desire might triumph over diligence. And as if tracking demographics isn't enough, the meadow vole also keeps a vigilant eye on the food supply. When edible vegetation is scarce (i.e., during times of drought) the dutiful creature breeds at a lower rate. Doubtless it composts, recycles and tithes its income to progressive social causes, too.

STANDING ROOM ONLY: "The U.S. paper industry will release the results of its capacity expansion survey for 1993 at a news conference.... The annual capacity survey provides a detailed profile of projected industry investments in new plants and equipment. Also to be

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announced at the conference will be the industry's new recovery goal for the recycling and reuse of paper products. The original goal, set in 1990, is expected to be met this year."—from a news release from the American Forest and Paper Association

(A reminder: Readers are invited to enter a competition to find notices of excruciatingly tedious meetings. The winner will receive a year's subscription.)

AND ADOLF HITLER, WHOSE *MEIN KAMPF* ULTIMATELY LED TO THE FOUNDING OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL: "Welcome to Frederick, Maryland, one of America's great small cities.... Frederick's star-spangled citizenry has included Francis Scott Key, author of the national anthem, and Chief Justice Roger Brooke Taney, whose *Dred Scott* decision ultimately led to the Emancipation Proclamation...."—from "A Tour of Historic Frederick Maryland"

(Thanks to David Boonin-Vail, Washington, D.C.) •

THE FLAPJACK FILE

BURNT OKRA

By Douglas G. McGrath

November 25, 1993—New Orleans

Today Mr. Carville married Miss Matalin. Flapjack and Mrs. Rodham-Flap took Air Force One to thank the man who got them into the White House. The guest list kept changing, always a problem for us in the Secret Service. Ed Rollins accepted, then declined, then accepted, but will deny having come. "Good head-game!" he said. Best of all, the Shrub came from Kennebunkport! He was a bridesmaid and spoke to everyone as he tossed out flower petals on his way down the aisle. Waved at Mr. Limbaugh. "Rush-a-roni, goodtoseeya, let's have a glass of shampoo when we're in the drink-downing mode...." He saw Timothy Hutton. "Oh, hey, hi there! It's the kid who put himself on the couch in *Ordinary People*. Looking better!"

There was another incident with Attorney General Reno. During cocktails she was watching T.V. She was doing shots of Captain Morgan's Rum and lighting honey-roasted peanuts on fire and rolling them down the bar. She pointed to the T.V. and said, "The producer of this appalling violence should be put in jail!" Then she realized it was footage from Waco. Made her so mad she shot out the set. While she was being sedated, Flap talked with Mrs. Shrub. They really hit it off. "Where can I buy a good, strong belt?" he asked. She asked him why he jogs, since he doesn't seem to lose any weight. "Keep my appetite up," he said. That endeared him to her, so she told him she'd buried a bag of Peanut M&Ms under the Lincoln rose bush in the Rose Garden in case of emergency. He thanked her, and confessed he'd rumbled it months ago and dug it up.

At dinner (alligator consommé, crocodile Kiev, lizard frites, burnt okra) the Shrub gave a toast. "Hey, O.K., yeah, the Bush tongue may not have any blue ribbons pinned on it for public speaking, but I'd still like to—I mean, I mean, I may be Mr. Smooth on the golf greens out there but when it comes to wordplay—*hey! no Walt Whitman am I!* Yeah, no. And so but let me help you with how I think all of us in here are feeling in here about you two over there and let me just say it with laserlike specificity: It's going to be—it'll be—there'll be a lot of—you know, if Perot hadn't gotten in, I could still be...." Mrs. Shrub jabbed him in the leg. He refocused. "There'll be days when you'll have your fill rancorwise, and so but listen to some advice from a guy who took his share of sticks and arrows from some pretty big spear-chuckers up on Capitol Hill up there who liked nothing better than to throw critique down my way: *don't churn around about it.* It's love city in this room and in the words of the Nitty Ditty Itty Bitty Great Bird—they said—well, let me just leave it at that. Just punch it into your computers like this: congrats, there, little Matador."

Then Flap stood. "There are a few things I would like to say to my friend James Carville," he said. "No. 1: I feel your love for Mary and I feel Mary's love for both of you and I love the way that feels!" He hoisted his glass and inadvertently hurled champagne in Mr. Steph's ear. Mr. Steph smiled and blotted.

"No. 2: The Carvilles are a great family and it occurs to me that they might be related to the French explorer Robert Cavelier, who descended the Mississippi River and claimed the river basin for France in 1682 and later died of gout. His journals, by the way, in the 1956 translation by Cosnard, are quite gripping, if anyone hasn't read them. On a humorous note, may I just say it's not the economy, stupid, it's the happiest day of your life!" Flap thought this was funny and slapped the table, flipping Mr. Steph's salad plate against his chest.

"No. 3: I hope you kids have a great honeymoon. Of course, if it lasts longer than a minute, it'll be longer than the one I got from this knee-jerk, always agin-me, change-averse media, even though the Iowa Institute for Political Study's semiannual journal said that I have the highest success rate of any president in his first year, except for Eisenhower, who, I might remind people, had just completed the winning of World War II and didn't have Sam Nunn staring him in the face every time he turned around." He started dragging his fingernails over the table. "You helped me, James, and I know you'll help Mary, whose last name, by the way, has the same root as the town of Matale in Sri Lanka, twenty-three kilometers north of Kandy, a vital cattle center with rubber plantations nearby. I feel your love for each other, but I also feel my anger. Haven't I done every damn thing I said I would? What about that damn family leave or the damn motor-voter bill or that goddamned

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national service thing I shoved down the status quo throats of a special interest, yesterday Congress?" He jerked on the tablecloth, pulling some hot coffee into Mr. Steph's lap, who signaled the waiter to bring the president a fresh cup. "You can ask does it bother me and I'll tell you no. I will just get up every day, eat my dozen eggs and do the hard work of change while continuing to feel your love. What the hell do people mean when they say I'm not a strong leader? That's a damn lie! I'm willing to be a strong leader if people will just promise not to get mad at me!"

When Flap finished, the Shrub came up and put his arm around him—well, as far around him as he could get it—and he said, "Message: carping little liberal media sucks."

The Flap looked at him and I thought there was a tear in his eye. "President Bush," he said, "we may have had our differences, but on the important things we agree."

DOUGLAS G. MCGRATH is a New York writer.

GAZA POSTCARD

MELTDOWN

By Charles Lane

On a dusty back road in the Gaza Strip city of Khan Yunis, Israeli troops prepare to withdraw. A bulldozer circles the site of one of their former outposts, lazily flattening the red earth. Workers take a barracks apart cinder block by cinder block. Palestinian kids rush forward to help rip out a barbed-wire fence. They are celebrating because this had been the Israeli army's headquarters in its search for Anwar Gideh, the wiry 26-year-old local hero who runs a unit of Fatah Hawks, the Gaza militia aligned with Yasir Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization. Gideh was "wanted" by the Israelis for his role in attacks on their troops. But thanks to the peace accord between Arafat and Israel, the house-to-house manhunt was called off. Gideh, along with some thirty other Fatah men, embraced Arafat's promise to renounce attacks on Israelis. Gideh even kissed his gun goodbye, literally, on national T.V. In fact, he is looking forward to a new career as a lawman himself. Fatah officials have announced that formerly imprisoned loyalists such as Gideh will receive preference in applying for jobs with the new Palestinian police force, which is supposed to keep order in Gaza once the Israelis begin leaving on December 13. "I said goodbye to the gun," Gideh told me. "But only for a little while, until the Palestinian authorities give me a new one."

Improbable as Anwar Gideh's conversion from criminal to cop seems, it will probably take many more like it to ensure an orderly transition from Israeli occupation to Palestinian self-rule in Gaza—and, by extension, the success of the entire autonomy plan. The intifada, born in Gaza as a rock-throwing rebellion, has long since given way to a highly organized war between Israeli security forces and well-armed, semiclandestine Palestinian militia. These groups dominate the political panorama in Gaza today: the Fatah Hawks; the Eagles, loyal to George Habash's radical Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP); and Izz al-Din al-Qassam, the armed wing of the Islamic resistance movement Hamas. In the past, the groups did not limit their attacks to the Israelis; they also turned on fellow Arabs, using bare-knuckle tactics to make businessmen participate in general strikes, or to shake them down for cash. All the factions took part in the execution of collaborators. All occasionally clashed with each other. At the same time they also functioned as a clandestine law enforcement apparatus, administering lashes to thieves and firing their guns at the legs of rapists. In the impoverished refugee camps, youth culture revolves around the figure of the "wanted man," the outlaw hero who took on the Israelis.

Pacifying these angry young men has become the most delicate issue of internal politics facing not only Israel, but more importantly Arafat and his fellow Fatah officials in Gaza. Hamas and the PFLP have already rejected the peace accord with Israel and are bent on disrupting it. But even within Fatah, Arafat's control is tenuous. No fewer than three moderate Fatah leaders, including Arafat's friend and trusted diplomatic aide Asad Saftawi, have been assassinated, gangland-style, since the accord was signed in September. All three killings are believed to have been carried out by members of Fatah itself. The murders may be the result of struggles over power in the new autonomy authority. (Many Palestinians have been offended by the high-handed manner in which Arafat has been dishing out jobs and money from his Tunis office.) Or the killings may have been carried out by young cadres within Fatah who were angry with Arafat for talking with Israel even before he signed the accord. Leaflets from dissident Fatah factions had already called for "opposition to the acts of Arafat and his advisers."

Most ominously, the Fatah Hawks launched new armed attacks on Israeli posts in Gaza last week, in revenge for an incident in which Israeli undercover troops killed Ahmad Abu Rish. Abu Rish, tragically enough, was one of the Hawks who had joined Gideh in accepting Israel's amnesty. The incident was part of an Israeli campaign—apparently designed to reassure settlers and others who are growing nervous about the future security situation in the territories—to go after "wanted men" of any faction who have still not accepted the accord. Abu Rish died in a shoot-out when two wanted Hawks he was harboring were discovered by the Israelis. In other words, Abu Rish died honoring the

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

Conservatives and Vouchers

A few days before the California voucher initiative went down to defeat by a seven-to-three margin, columnist David Broder issued a "pre-mortem" blast at conservatives for not supporting the measure ("Shameful Silence On School Vouchers," *Washington Post*, October 27, 1993). Broder called vouchers a "perfect issue" for conservatives, one that appealed to the "movement's best and brightest thinkers." He expressed disgust at the lack of support—and especially financial support—from California conservatives. But perhaps the problem is with Broder's notion about the constituency for vouchers rather than with California conservatives.

In fact, good conservatives would have many questions about supporting vouchers, and some of the questions California conservatives asked undoubtedly played a big part in sinking the voucher initiative there.

■ *Would the voucher initiative end up costing taxpayers more money?* The initiative was billed as a scheme that would save money at the same time as it improved California schools. But conservatives had a hard time believing that the state could give $2,600 to the students already in private schools *and* maintain a decent level of support for public schools. Did this mean public schools would be sacrificed? And would vouchers lead to an unacceptable choice down the road? Either raise taxes or accelerate the decline of California schools—and the loss of business and jobs to states with decent education systems?

■ *Would vouchers further the splintering of communities?* Conservatives believe that communities are very important and are eager to preserve them. That is one reason they opposed busing in the `60s and `70s. Vouchers, too, would tend to break up neighborhoods and communities by moving youngsters out of their local schools into many different schools in different localities.

■ *Would vouchers encourage extremist educational ideas?* Conservatives often fight against what they see as far-out ideas in the public schools—the current battle against outcomes-based education is a good example. So they had serious reservations about a proposal that would have given anybody who could attract 25 kids the right to start a school with taxpayers' money. Pro-voucher campaigners poohpoohed the possibility of witch schools or Koresh schools, but as people who read the legislation knew, there was nothing in it to stop virtually any group from starting a school in which virtually anything was taught.

Conservatives were not about to enshrine a voucher system in the state constitution—and make it nearly unchangeable—without knowledge of the unanticipated consequences.

■ *Would vouchers really lead to educational excellence?* Conservatives support rigorous academic content, and they have been critical of the low standards in public schools. But they hesitated to abandon a public school system with low standards for a private school system that, under the voucher initiative, would not have been required to have any.

■ *Would vouchers lead to government regulation of private schools?* Conservatives are happy that private schools are largely unregulated, and many send their kids to these schools. While they were tempted by the idea of a $2,600 voucher, they also knew that taking government money inevitably leads to government controls. The California voucher proposition was written with these fears in mind. By requiring a three-quarters majority to pass any legislation that would impose additional regulation on private schools, the voucher initiative tried to build a wall that was almost impossible to breach. However, conservatives knew that you can never be sure some federal judge won't hand down a ruling that will suddenly open private schools to the same kind of regulation that, in their view, has ruined the public schools.

In recent years, the major contribution of conservative thinkers has been to point out the hubris of the liberals. Liberals were convinced that their well-intentioned social programs would yield exactly the results they envisioned. Instead, practically every program had unintended results that were devastating. Among them, according to conservatives, were big increases in welfare dependency, promiscuity and crime. In the conservative view, any program is likely to have unintended consequences, and new programs must first be tried on a small scale. So conservatives looking at the California voucher initiative were not about to be guilty of the same hubris as the liberals. They were not about to enshrine a voucher system in the state constitution—and make it nearly unchangeable—without knowledge of the unanticipated consequences.

Voucher supporters charge that they lost the referendum because of the enormous amounts of money spent by voucher opponents, including the teacher unions. But "Why School Choice Lost," an article by John J. Miller that appeared in the *Wall Street Journal* the day after the election, may be a lot closer to the truth. According to Miller, "School choice failed in California because Republican voters didn't want it."

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1993 by Albert Shanker.

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same code that had probably saved his life many times in the past: you don't turn a wanted man out of your house.

All of this plays into the hands of Hamas, which knows perfectly well that one of the reasons for the peace accord was the mutual Israeli-PLO interest in thwarting the fundamentalist organization. Hamas, according to opinion polls just conducted by Palestinian political scientists, commands the support of a fifth of Gaza's population. It has been growing steadily in the territories, using Iranian cash to win over supporters who felt abandoned by Arafat's organization, especially after the Gulf Arabs began to starve it of cash in retaliation for his support of Saddam Hussein. When you add Hamas's base to that of the PFLP and the Islamic jihad, radical groups in Gaza enjoy about 30 percent popularity. To Hamas, the incipient Arafat-led autonomy authority is little more than a local version of secularist regimes like those in Egypt and Algeria, which have used brutal repression against the rise of Islamic insurrectionists. "There will not be a big difference between the police force here and the police force in other Arab countries," Mohsen Ali Abu Eta, a Hamas leader in Gaza, told me. "As Muslims, we have no trust in Arab democracy."

Arafat's problem reining in his own radicals simply confirms what Hamas officials have always believed are the built-in contradictions of Fatah's projected police role in the territories. During a five-day visit to Gaza that ended just before the flare-up of violence between the Hawks and the Israeli army, I made a point of asking everyone I met the same question: What would happen if a Palestinian were to attack a Jewish soldier or settler, and then flee into territory controlled by the new Palestinian police force? Would the Palestinians arrest him? Or would the new cops, drawn from the ranks of former PLO fighters, look the other way—as Ahmad Abu Rish did when two of his former running mates came looking for help? I never got a straight answer out of anyone from Fatah. But to Hamas, it was a no-brainer: "If Fatah wants to serve as an Israeli tool like this, then it will find itself fighting all the people, and we will deal with it as an occupier," Abu Eta told me. No one can say Hamas doesn't stand up for its "wanted men." After Israeli troops gunned down Imad Akkel, the 24-year-old chief of Izz al-Din al-Qassam, wanted for attacks on eleven Israelis, Hamas staged a violent street demonstration in Gaza in which one teenager was killed and dozens of people wounded by Israeli gunfire.

Faced with the prospect that they are about to inherit an ungovernable Gaza, Arafat's lieutenants are showing signs of succumbing to the authoritarian temptation. Some, for example, are lobbying to retain Gaza's 8 p.m. curfew—a hated symbol of occupation—even after the Israelis leave. Otherwise, the night will belong to the same hit squads that murdered Asad Saftawi. In conceding that, they only confirm Hamas's contempt for democracy as it is practiced in the Arab world. But for a generation of Fatah leaders schooled in the politics of dictatorial Arab regimes, authoritarian rule is the only model they know. After all, some here say, that's the way Arafat ran the PLO's slice of Lebanon before the Israelis kicked him out in 1982. "We need a police force to keep order, otherwise we'll be lost," Riyad al-Khadoury, an Arafat ally who serves as president of Gaza's al-Nazhar University, said. "We need order first, then democracy." It could be a long wait.

CHARLES LANE writes frequently about international affairs.

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

SECOND OPINION

By Fred Barnes

Before dispatching the administration's health care plan to Congress last November, Hillary Rodham Clinton and her ally, Ira Magaziner, invited members of Congress to the White House to enlist them as co-sponsors. One Democratic senator was playfully recalcitrant, telling the First Lady she should offer enticements to potential sponsors. O.K., she said, what do you want? I want you to drop the National Health Board and price controls from your plan, the senator answered. Then I'll be a co-sponsor. No way, Rodham Clinton responded. Those are absolutely essential to health care reform. Thus the senator declined to endorse the Clinton plan (thirty-one senators and 102 representatives have signed on as co-sponsors).

So much for flexibility. For now, the White House is not in the mood to compromise. At least the folks in charge of health care aren't. A senior White House official quotes both Rodham Clinton and Magaziner as taking this position: "Why do we want to make pre-emptive concessions? Let's hold tight and see what we can get." So, rather than make a deal with moderate Democratic Representative Jim Cooper of Tennessee, author of a rival proposal with bipartisan support, Rodham Clinton first attacked his plan, then sent Magaziner to pressure him into altering it. Neither tactic worked. One reason is Cooper believes that President Clinton, unlike the First Lady, wants to be accommodating. He jogged with Clinton and chatted about health care for ninety minutes on November 9, the day after the First Lady zinged him publicly. Others, including Clinton allies like Democratic Senator John Breaux of Louisiana, also are convinced of the president's flexibility. But because of Rodham Clinton's stance, "we're getting mixed signals," Breaux says.

Under normal circumstances, the no compromise stance would make sense, with congressional voting on health care many months off. But there's a wild card:

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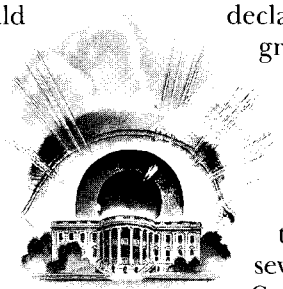
Democratic and Republican centrists. Led by Cooper and Republican Senator John Chafee of Rhode Island, they've begun negotiations on a compromise health care bill that scraps both price controls and a powerful health board. Moreover, unlike the Clinton plan, it does not require employers to pay 80 percent of the cost of health insurance for all employees. In fact, Cooper and Chafee are close to agreeing on legislation—with little input from the White House. Their bill would appeal to a broad centrist coalition and surely have a better chance of gaining majority support in Congress than Clinton's bill. The popularity of the Clinton plan has sunk since the president's September 22 health care speech. The result: the White House would be marginalized in the health care debate.

To avert this, Rodham Clinton and Magaziner have held their own talks with Chafee, whose views are closer to Rodham Clinton's than to Cooper's (Chafee privately prefers an employer mandate). When Senate Minority Leader Bob Dole appointed Chafee GOP point man on health care last year, he was warned this would cause problems. "But not today," Dole said. As it turned out, the biggest problem is the White House's. Rodham Clinton likes one aspect of Chafee's bill in particular, the mandate for "universal coverage." This provides room for compromise, she told an invitation-only press conference on November 8, while Cooper's insistence on "universal access" doesn't. But Chafee has quietly inched away from universal coverage. When his bill was formally introduced just before Thanksgiving, it delayed such coverage until the year 2005 and then only if there's money to pay for it. Moreover, Chafee is not a free agent. He can only agree to a compromise his twenty-three Senate Republican co-sponsors favor, and that's far more likely to be with Cooper than with Hillary Rodham Clinton.



Cooper has gotten under Rodham Clinton's skin. Last spring he referred to aspects of the Clinton plan—the cap on insurance premiums and the employer mandate—as "poison." In a newsletter in June, he wrote: "Between their focus on global budgets and the gratuitous attacks on the profession (made most recently by the First Lady), the administration seems doomed to having a majority of doctors opposing its plan." In a meeting with Rodham Clinton a month later, Cooper apologized for writing that, though it remains unquestionably true. But it's still a sore point with the White House. In November Magaziner nagged Cooper about it again.

Rodham Clinton isn't the only one at the White House who is annoyed with Cooper. "People think he overstates the case," says a senior official. Cooper has softened his attacks on the Clinton plan, but not much. Introducing his own bill in October, he praised Rodham Clinton. "We particularly applaud the First Lady's courage, vision and outreach," he said. "No one could have worked harder, more compassionately or more intelligently than she has to try to solve our health care problems." Then he objected to the Clinton plan's "employer mandates, global budgets, price controls, restrictive/regulatory purchasing cooperatives, excessive state flexibility and the continuation of unlimited tax deductibility for health benefits." He lumped all these as "big government." For Rodham Clinton, however, they're crucial parts of what she calls the "structure for achieving universal coverage."

Isolating or neutralizing Cooper has become a major goal of Rodham Clinton. At her press conference, she said the Chafee and single-payer plans provide a basis for compromise, but pointedly ruled out Cooper's proposal. "I don't know anyone who has looked at his plan, who has really studied it from the perspective of achieving universal coverage, who believes it achieves universal coverage," she said. "There's a lot about it ... we don't agree with." Ironically, that same day, White House aides, including speechwriter Jeremy Rosner and Magaziner, convened to discuss how to bridge differences on health care with the moderate Democratic Leadership Council, which has embraced the Cooper plan. Earlier, Will Marshall, head of the DLC's think tank, had declared Cooper's bill "consistent" with the group's vision of pure managed competition. It "will achieve a key goal of health care reform—universal access to medical coverage for all Americans."

Rather than move toward the DLC's position, the White House is trying to wean the group from Cooper. Magaziner also spent several days in November seeking to wean Cooper from his plan. He wanted Cooper to endorse a mandate, any mandate—employer, individual, government. Doing so would put Cooper on board with universal coverage. But Cooper rebuffed Magaziner and stuck with universal access, which would make health insurance affordable for nearly everyone but, unlike universal coverage, wouldn't compel them to buy it. Magaziner offered Cooper no concessions. The meetings were not friendly. After voices were raised in angry disagreement, a final meeting was canceled. Cooper came away appalled at Magaziner's political clumsiness.

Magaziner isn't the only channel to Cooper and his bipartisan coalition. Counselor David Gergen, who favored managed competition before he came to the White House, talks to him frequently. Cooper consulted Gergen after Rodham Clinton's attack. And when Cooper joined a group of journalists and public policy experts over dinner on November 22, Gergen showed up (he's a former member of the group). He and Cooper spoke warmly. Meanwhile, Breaux, the chief Senate sponsor of the Cooper bill, confers regularly with Mack McLarty, the White House chief of staff.

McLarty has told associates he favors a centrist coalition like Cooper's. But he doesn't control Rodham Clinton's health care team, a separate fiefdom at the White House. She's been egged on by Clinton pollster Stanley Greenberg to build a more liberal coalition by wooing the 100 or so congressional advocates of a Canadian-style health system. The president will have to decide. "When the issues are elevated to their peak priority, he'll make sound decisions," says Cooper confidently. The time is near. •

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Are the Muslims the aggressors?

BLAMING THE VICTIM

By Tom Gjelten

The Bosnian government's decision on November 8 to suspend an evacuation of Serbian residents from Sarajevo evidently enraged the Serb fighters who surround the city, because it was followed the next day by an artillery assault such as Sarajevans hadn't experienced for weeks. Before that, life had taken a few steps back toward normal. Children in the Alipasino Polje settlement on Sarajevo's west side were attending classes daily in an improvised schoolroom on the ground floor of an apartment building where many of them lived. The building is just a few hundred meters from the front line, but some concrete slabs were set against the exterior walls for protection against shelling.

The students in Alipasino that day were sitting at their desks, books open in front of them, when a mortar round crashed through an unshielded window and exploded in their midst, blowing children out of their seats and spraying the classroom walls with blood. The schoolteacher and two students were killed. A second shell hit near the entrance to the building, and more children died there. Reporters arriving at the scene found pieces of bloodstained clothing, children's shoes and chunks of human body tissue lying scattered about.

In a letter to the United Nations Security Council, Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic charged that the shelling was planned "in such a way as to produce as many casualties among children as possible." The United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Sarajevo concluded the shelling was not accidental. To be sure, artillery weapons can misfire, and the odd round can go astray, but U.N. investigators believe this did not happen at Alipasino Polje, since two shells landed relatively near each other. Analyses of their impact craters showed that the shells at the school and a third shell that hit moments later at an open market a few hundred yards away all came from the same direction. "These were deliberate shots," said Col. Bill Aikman, the UNPROFOR spokesman in Sarajevo.

Reports of the carnage at the Alipasino school were naturally received with shock and horror outside Bosnia. But in spite of the prime minister's letter, the incident was viewed oddly: not as a particularly hideous atrocity or war crime, but as a simple tragedy. No Western government pinned the blame on the Serb forces who were shelling the city heavily. The reason: U.N. officials asked the world to consider the possibility that the mortars that hit the settlement actually may have been fired by the Muslim-dominated Bosnian Army and not by the Serbs.

The crater analyses showed that the mortar shells came from the southwest of Alipasino Polje, along a line originating in a Serb-controlled area but running beyond into territory held by the Bosnian Army. The U.N. investigators, according to Aikman, could not determine how far the mortar rounds traveled through the air and were thus unable to say which side did the firing. "On the basis of the territory covered," Aikman told me, "we have to consider it a 50-50 mathematical possibility between the Serb army and the government forces as to where the rounds came from. To go beyond that wouldn't be fair to either side."

This is where Bosnians now stand in the regard of the United Nations in Sarajevo: the U.N. command officially thinks that Bosnian government forces are as likely as the Serbs to fire shells at Bosnian children. This is imaginable among U.N. personnel because they have been persuaded by Serb (and Croat) leaders that the Bosnian Muslims are willing to stage attacks on themselves in an effort to grab the world's attention and trigger a military intervention on their behalf. The argument, of course, has an appealing ring to Western government ministers always ready for reasons not to get involved in Bosnia: if the Muslims are this conniving, they don't deserve to be helped. Last May, Secretary of State Warren Christopher expressed this desire to see the conflict as one among equally culpable protagonists. Bosnia, he said, was a "morass" of hate and distrust among Serbs, Croats and Bosnians, a place where "there are atrocities on all sides."

Throughout twenty-one months of war in Sarajevo, however, no physical evidence has ever been found that suggests Muslims purposely shoot themselves, and at this stage the notion is as preposterous as it is insulting to Bosnian honor. More than 1,400 children have been killed in Sarajevo already; 2,000 have been left permanently injured; there have been hundreds of days of awful shelling, and no prospect of outside intervention is in sight. Yet we are to consider the possibility that the Sarajevo government thinks the sacrifice of a few more children's lives and bodies will make a difference. "This war has done strange things to people," is all Aikman will say.

The accusation that one side in a conflict kills its own people in order to get its enemy blamed for the atrocity is not new in the annals of war propaganda. The claim has found acceptance in the case of Sarajevo for two reasons: the persistence of the Serb leadership in making it, and the readiness of the city's first U.N. commander, Maj. Gen. Lewis MacKenzie, to believe it. MacKenzie tells the Muslims-bomb-themselves story in *Peacekeeper* (Douglas & McIntyre, 1993), the newly published memoir of his tenure in Sarajevo during the crucial first five months of the war.

MacKenzie's suspicions apparently originated with the gruesome "bread line bombing" in Sarajevo on May 27, 1992, in which more than twenty people died and more then 100 were injured when two blasts ripped

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through a crowd lining up for bread on Vasa Miskin, a street in the city center. A Sarajevo television crew arrived shortly after the attack and filmed the horror. A woman held her severed leg in her arms; a man sat in a puddle of his own blood, one hand reaching up to the camera in a plea for help. The images, which were shown around the world on CNN, had an immediate impact. Bosnian Serb forces were blamed for the attack, described in news accounts as a mortar assault, and the U.N. Security Council voted three days later to impose trade sanctions on Serbia.

Serb leaders, recognizing the damage done to their already sullied image, immediately denied responsibility for the massacre and made a countercharge: that the Vasa Miskin bombing had been staged by the Bosnian Muslims themselves—"a setup using explosives," as MacKenzie notes. Though he was in Belgrade on the day of the bombing, his diary entry for the day indicates that he found the Serb claim believable, even from afar: "Our people tell us there were a number of things that didn't fit. The street had been blocked off just before the incident. Once the crowd was let in and had lined up, the media appeared but kept their distance. The attack took place, and the media were immediately on the scene."

MacKenzie does not identify the U.N. "people" who gave him his information. The Sarajevo mission that day was under the command of Col. John Wilson, MacKenzie's deputy. Wilson now denies telling MacKenzie there was anything that "didn't fit" the account of a Serb mortar attack. He says he told MacKenzie of Serb media reports on the bombing, but did not comment on their credibility. No UNPROFOR officers visited the Vasa Miskin scene or interviewed witnesses.

Each of the items MacKenzie mentioned in his diary came from Serb officials who offered their own account of what happened at Vasa Miskin—all of which was based on an analysis of televised reports. Col. Milorad Cvijovic, an "expert in explosives" from the Serb-dominated Yugoslav air force, explained to the Belgrade paper *Politika* that there was no trace of a mortar crater at the scene nor signs of shrapnel damage on nearby walls, and that the injuries evident among people pictured in the tapes were all below the waist. The "expert" concluded that the explosion was caused by a "directed action mine" triggered remotely.

A Serbian government press release extended the Cvijovic scenario: "Attention should also be directed to the behavior of the casualties; some of them, although both their legs have been torn off, are still conscious and watching what is happening around them.... It can be justly suspected that the 'directors' of this massacre took out in the streets people that were already mutilated, in order to make the scene 'more convincing.' The cameramen were also briefed on the assignment, and were therefore trying to create the impression that the destruction was enormous."

Back in Sarajevo a few days later, MacKenzie had lunch with Gen. Zivota Panic, chief of staff of the Yugoslav Army, who laid out for the U.N. officer the Serb analysis of the bread line bombing in detail. "I told them what we had and what we thought of it," Panic told me recently in Belgrade, "and they agreed with us."

The Serb story was wrong. There were two craters on the sidewalk where the bread line had been, and the bakery walls were pockmarked as if by shrapnel; perhaps all this had been left out of the T.V. footage. Some victims suffered injuries to their heads and chests—not just to their legs, as the Serb "expert" contended. The street had not been blocked off, as MacKenzie believed, and the Sarajevo T.V. crew had not been waiting for the blasts; they were filming about a block away, at a building known as the Ex-Officers' Club, and rushed over after the explosion. Moreover, none of the many alleged participants came forward to corroborate the story of a staged incident.

MacKenzie, however, was undeterred. His conversations with Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic left him convinced that Izetbegovic was desperate for military aid and would do whatever he could to get it. When François Mitterrand visited Sarajevo on June 28, MacKenzie (according to his own written account) told him the Bosnian president wanted to "make it look as if the Serbs are solely responsible" for the chaos in Sarajevo. "There is strong but circumstantial evidence," MacKenzie quotes himself as saying, "that some really horrifying acts of cruelty attributed to the Serbs were actually orchestrated by the Muslims against their own people, for the benefit of an international audience." By his own account, the only example MacKenzie had in mind was the bread line bombing, but he still hadn't ordered an investigation of the incident, nor had he bothered to visit the site of the massacre.

The next incident to catch MacKenzie's attention came three weeks later, during a visit to Sarajevo by Douglas Hurd, the British foreign secretary. MacKenzie wrote in *Peacekeeper* that ten mortar rounds fell outside the Bosnian government headquarters shortly after Hurd entered the building, and that "everyone who witnessed the event had an uneasy feeling that it had been orchestrated by the presidency to place the Serbs in a bad light." MacKenzie's evidence for the allegation: a Bosnian Army honor guard moved away from the entrance to the building ("took cover," MacKenzie writes) before the shells hit.

In an interview, MacKenzie conceded that the evidence of Bosnian responsibility for either the Hurd shelling or the Vasa Miskin massacre "would not stand up in court," but in the summer of 1992 he apparently felt he had all he needed to argue the case. Asked at a press conference in July what could be done to arrange a cease-fire around the city, the Sarajevo newspaper *Oslobodjenje* quoted the general as answering, "If I could convince both sides to stop killing their own people for CNN, perhaps we could have a cease-fire." In his book, MacKenzie claims he didn't say exactly that, "but I certainly thought it," and the quote runs as MacKenzie's own in large type on the back cover. Never does he offer an example of Serbs' killing their people. It is an

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accusation aimed at the Bosnian side, and the recklessness MacKenzie displayed in making it apparently got him in trouble with his superiors. Within two weeks, he was pulled out of Sarajevo prematurely and sent home to his native Canada.

On August 22 a story headlined "MUSLIMS 'SLAUGHTER THEIR OWN PEOPLE'" ran on the front page of *The Independent* in London. The article, written from New York by Leonard Doyle, the paper's U.N. correspondent, said that United Nations officials believed the bread line massacre and some other killings in Sarajevo were carried out by the city's defenders "as a propaganda ploy" to win sympathy. It cited the Hurd shelling, among other incidents (none of which involved civilian deaths), but it focused primarily on the Vasa Miskin case. Doyle quoted a "U.N. official" as saying, "We believe it was a command-detonated explosion, probably in a can," since the mark left on the sidewalk by the blast was not what would be expected from a mortar shell. Neither MacKenzie nor Doyle will now admit that MacKenzie is the unnamed official in the story, though colleagues of Doyle's say he told them MacKenzie was his principal source.

On a recent visit to Sarajevo, I took a Dutch U.N. soldier trained in crater analysis, Sgt. Jack Stokx, to Vasa Miskin to examine the sidewalk. "These are pretty old," he said of the two craters, "but as far as I can judge, these have been [made by] little mortar shells. I can tell by the shape of the shrapnel [marks]." Kneeling to take a closer look, he said, "There were no ground devices here. It was something coming out of the sky."

At this point, there is still no evidence that Bosnian forces staged the bread line massacre. MacKenzie himself is no longer so sure of the charge. "It will take other investigations, other than somebody who saw it from afar or only saw bits and pieces of the evidence, to come to a conclusive finding," he told me. But his point has been made. Serb media still cite *The Independent* story as proof that their side has been wrongly accused. *Time* magazine, speculating in March 1993 on who might have been responsible for the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York, noted that the "Bosnian Muslims, too, have reason to play a part in the Balkan blame game. They have been known to bomb their own people in Bosnia, hoping the Serbs and the Croats would be held responsible." MacKenzie's premise has achieved the status of conventional wisdom.

Lewis MacKenzie's early endorsement of the Serb claim that Bosnian government forces shelled their own positions and killed their own people convinced many Sarajevans that he favored the Serbs. In truth, MacKenzie repeatedly has said he believes the Serbs bear the greater share of responsibility for Sarajevo's suffering. Why, then, was he so ready to exonerate them on the bread line massacre? A U.N. political officer who served with him in Sarajevo, and who spoke only on the condition of anonymity, says MacKenzie took the Serbs' word on the shelling because at the time he was looking for something he could pin on the Muslims. "Psychologically, he needed it," the aide says. "We had been blaming the Serbs for everything, and it was uncomfortable for MacKenzie, meeting with them all the time. He felt this need to balance it."

When MacKenzie arrived in Sarajevo, he had served more than thirty years in the Canadian Armed Forces. But his combat experience had come through participation in U.N. peacekeeping missions around the world, and he brought to his work the instincts of a professional U.N. soldier. He was predisposed to find a place in the middle without considering the rightness or wrongness of any side's position. Having served in Gaza, Cyprus, Vietnam and Central America, MacKenzie viewed Bosnia simply as one more crazy foreign land, as he made clear in a letter he wrote to friends back home. "Well, it's springtime in the Balkans," the letter began, "and history is repeating itself as the various ethnic groups (Muslims, Croats and Serbs) seek to exterminate each other." It is as far as MacKenzie goes in attempting to understand the war in which he found himself. He devotes more space in his book to his views on motor racing than to a discussion of Yugoslav nationalism.

In his disdain for thoughtful analysis, however, MacKenzie merely reflects what U.N. service instills in its peacekeepers. He is still regarded with grudging admiration in U.N. circles, where his outlook is shared if his manners are not. Many of the organization's officials are uncomfortable with moral clarity, especially if it impedes their work. Theirs is a world in which the assignment of responsibility is often governed not by judgments of fact and principle but by considerations of convenience. The shelling of the school came at a time when U.N. officials in Sarajevo were trying to persuade the Bosnian Serbs to release two Sarajevo policemen who had been kidnapped at gunpoint from a U.N. vehicle. Had the U.N. command unequivocally blamed the Serbs for the school bombing, the negotiations for the policemen, who were released, would have been complicated.

But when a criminal act goes uncondemned, it compounds the injury to the victim. The Czech novelist Ivan Klima, writing in *Granta* of his childhood experiences in the Theresienstadt concentration camp, recalled that everyone there clung to a blind belief in "a fairy-tale world in which the forces of good triumph in a never-ending battle with the forces of evil." This faith, Klima says, "helped them to sustain themselves and survive the humiliations, the anxiety, the disease and the hunger."

It is, however, precisely this faith—that wrongs will be judged as wrong—that the guardians of world order deny to the Bosnians by professing bafflement over who does what to whom in this war we call strange. It must hurt enough for Sarajevans under siege to hear we will do nothing to stop the slaughter of their children in cold schoolrooms, but we cut deeper: for all we know, we say, it's their own fault.

TOM GJELTEN, a correspondent for National Public Radio, is writing a book about the war in Sarajevo.

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The long gay march: from the closet to the barricades, to the barracks, to everyone's backyard.

Democracy and Homosexuality

By Paul Berman

I.

Twenty-five years ago this past spring, on May 10, 1968, the "Night of the Barricades" in Paris, 20,000 students paraded through the Latin Quarter threatening vague unimaginable revolutions against the prejudices, power, practices and hierarchies of every conceivable thing that could be labeled a yoke on the neck of mankind. Activists from the old-fashioned Marxist youth groups and the official student organizations had every hope of keeping order among the marchers and providing marshals and imposing leaders and slogans. But Marxist youth movements and official student organizations were themselves a yoke on the neck of mankind. Daniel Cohn-Bendit, the *enragé* from Nanterre, stood on a bench with a bullhorn hectoring the crowd with slogans all his own: "There are no marshals and no leaders today! Nobody is responsible for you! You are responsible for yourselves, each row of you responsible for itself! *You* are the marshals!" And the youth of France marched by in a tizzy of utopian aspiration.

Exactly how, with what twists of the analytic imagination, do you write the history of quasi-insurrectionary moments like that? The first impulse of any sensible historian might be to trace the footsteps of the influential leaders and the doings of powerful institutions, and generally to bring to bear the ordinary gray categories of political analysis. But there were nights of the barricades all over the world between the spring of 1968 and the spring of 1970. The young generation filled the streets, and the leaders of ordinary political organizations ran around influencing nobody and the hipper firebrands shouted weird anti-leader slogans of their own. And if you took those ordinary political categories and applied them in a spirit of scholarly zeal, uprisings that once lived and breathed would drag themselves across your page and expire on the spot.

For the '68-era movements were political events, but also carnival events. Leaders and institutions played their roles; but a history of the leaders and institutions would be the history of everything except the spirit of insurrection. And once you had committed yourself to the conventional political considerations, how would you be able to explain that the slogans about making love instead of war and forbidding to forbid stood at the mysterious heart, and not on the freaky sidelines, of the many curious events?

Stonewall
by Martin Duberman
(Dutton, 330 pp., $23)

Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: The History of a Lesbian Community
by Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy and Madeline D. Davis
(Routledge, 464 pp., $29.95)

Making History: The Struggle for Gay and Lesbian Equal Rights 1945-1990, an Oral History
by Eric Marcus
(HarperCollins, 534 pp., $14 paper)

Queer in America: Sex, the Media and the Closets of Power
by Michelangelo Signorile
(Random House, 368 pp., $23)

Sisters, Sexperts, Queers: Beyond the Lesbian Nation
edited by Arlene Stein
(Plume, 281 pp., $11 paper)

Conduct Unbecoming: Gays & Lesbians in the U.S. Military
by Randy Shilts
(St. Martin's, 784 pp., $27.95)

A Place at the Table: The Gay Individual in American Society
by Bruce Bawer
(Poseidon, 269 pp., $21)

The Corporate Closet: The Professional Lives of Gay Men in America
by James D. Woods with Jay H. Lucas
(The Free Press, 331 pp., $22.95)

Out in the World
by Neil Miller
(Vintage, 365 pp., $13 paper)

The leftism of the '60s staged its uprisings in any number of fields, and one of those uprisings, as it happens, was intended to overthrow the habits and the predilections of conventional history-writing. New Left political movements broke away from the old working-class parties in the later '50s and early '60s. And in those same years and under some of the same impulses, a number of historians made a break of their own and began to work up, out of some older inspirations, the project that E. P. Thompson described in 1966 as "history from below." To write history from the point of view of the downtrodden was always a difficult thing. It made for dreary narratives sometimes. The historians were always in danger of lapsing into a nostalgia for the marginal. But history from below had several virtues, too, and the grandest of those, certainly the cleverest from a literary perspective, was the ability to tell two stories at once, while seeming to be telling one.

The apparent story, the one that sometimes seemed a little slow and tedious, was typically a minutely documented tale about, say, riotous crowds in the eighteenth-century streets, or about drinkers in the taverns of long ago and how they spent their idle, boozy hours, or about rural people with quaint and unusual customs, or about some other ungainly topic whose drama and importance were other than obvious. But beneath those many arcane details you were supposed to glimpse a few glittering hints of something huger and deeper, and when you put those hints together, what you half-detected was a buried epic of freedom and history, in a fragmented version. You saw the great drama of the left: the story about people who have been exploited or persecuted coming to understand their true condition, and painfully thinking their way through to an idea that life can be better, and rousing themselves at last to fight for a juster world, not only for themselves.

From time to time the historians themselves seemed to be up on a bench, shouting: "At moments when human freedom surges up from the unknown depths, famous leaders and powerful institutions do not, in fact, count for much! Humble

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individuals and lowly despised corners of society make their own history—at least they can, and someday soon they will, and the tiniest details of the forgotten past show their capacity to do so!" But history from below was always a disciplined style of writing, never a demagogic one (at least not in the hands of its better practitioners). The moral fervor flickered for a moment, and then you were back to poring over obscure documents and forgotten events, and you could almost forget that anything impassioned or unusual had taken place.

The classic themes for the historians-from-below in the '60s were topics like the French Revolution of 1789 and the rise of the labor movement, which lent themselves naturally, maybe too naturally, to the up-from-below idea. But as the years have passed, one other field of scholarly investigation has similarly lent itself, namely, the story of the 1968-era movements themselves—the most natural topic of all, you might suppose, for a style of writing whose every page exudes a remnant scent of the '60s left. No one seems to have noticed the achievement, but writers in a number of countries, not just academic historians and not just in English, have worked up something that could be called, with a bit of exaggeration, an international style for writing the history of those several uprisings.

The style, if I can describe it broadly, has two main methods or approaches that derive from the academic school of history from below, together with sundry nonacademic inspirations from documentary filmmaking and the *roman vrai* and Latin American "testimonial" literature. By now each of the two main approaches has managed to generate, in one country or another, a history of the period that, because of its vividness and its authenticity, can be regarded as more or less classic.

There is the method of braiding together a collective biography of innumerable big shots and small shots in the style of a Victorian novel, to show that events come about because of a large number of modest personal histories and not because of impersonal forces and giant institutions. The great example is the giant two-volume history of the '68 movement in France, *Génération*, by Hervé Hamon and Patrick Rotman, whose 1,311 pages have got to be the most grandiose account in any country of the '68 upheavals. And there is the "micro-history" method of reconstructing in hyper-detail the story of a single representative event, in order to demonstrate that crowds and mass protests consist of specific individuals responding to personal promptings in understandable ways. The classic example is Mexican. It is *La noche de Tlatelolco* by the chief chronicler of the '68 generation in Mexico, Elena Poniatowska, who weaves together a huge number of "oral history" testimonies with crowd chants and newspaper clippings to reconstruct the gruesome October '68 massacre of the student movement in Mexico City.

I don't know why, but writers who have set out to compose full-scale surveys of the '68-era movements in the United States have mostly shied away from these two techniques. Still, here and there you do find the international '68 style applied, on a small scale, to American themes. Some years ago the English historian Ronald Fraser and a phalanx of colleagues set out to compose an oral history overview of '68 movements in several of the Western democracies (under the title *1968: A Student Generation in Revolt*), and the American students were accorded their portion, with vivid results. But more vivid, more authentic, even than Fraser's work, it seems to me, is *Stonewall*, the new book by Martin Duberman. This is a modest volume, closer to a popular history than to a full-scale Thompson-like academic study, yet with a perfect focus, from the viewpoint of the international style.

For if the single violent incident that Duberman has reconstructed was, in comparison to the Latin Quarter uprising or the massacre in Mexico, small and almost peaceable, no one can say that memory of the event has faded, any more than has memory of the French May or the Mexican October. And if Duberman's strand of '68-era radicalism could never be confused with the movement of an entire student generation, if Duberman's strand was in fact so marginal and idiosyncratic in its early days that most of the historians of the era have passed it by entirely or have recorded its existence with only a handful of squeamish and embarrassed sentences—even so, no one can say that modest origins have meant a modest future.

On the contrary: the small has grown and will probably keep on growing, until one day the single radical strand that Duberman has described will end up looking like not only the hardiest but the truest of all the products of the '68-era upsurge—'68-ness itself, in leafy bloom. For what Duberman's book has so tenderly brought to life is the political tendency that announced its existence to the world on June 28, 1969, thirteen months after the uprising in the Latin Quarter, when New York's Greenwich Village went through its own Night of the Barricades in the odd-angled eighteenth-century streets outside the Stonewall Inn at Sheridan Square, and the modern international movement for gay liberation was born.

Duberman's method is to recount the biographies, beginning with childhood, of only six people, instead of the dozens that you find in *Génération*. Yet six life stories are enough to beam a clarifying light on the uprising that finally took place in the Village and on quite a bit that happened to the gay movement later on. The purpose in writing a group portrait, as he explains it, is to affirm a democratic belief in "the importance of the individual" and the "commonality of life." Here again he follows the international school. But in the case of *Stonewall*, collective biography lets the historian accomplish something else, too, which is to lower us, by a ladder of intimate details, into realms of psychological reflection and sexual motivation that, until shown otherwise by the scholarly examples of Jacques Lacan and Michel Foucault (themselves the philosophers of '68), were normally considered too murky or too remote from public events to be taken into serious consideration.

And so we find ourselves reading that, of the two women in Duberman's group portrait, both went through a youthful phase of having boyfriends, and both had early lesbian relations, too—even back to summer camp at age 7, if you count the childhood crushes of Duberman's woman No. 1, Karla Jay. Woman No. 2, Yvonne Flowers, announced to her family her attraction to women by age 12 or 13. As for Duberman's four men, none of them seems to have experienced any appreciable longings at all for the opposite sex. In the old Kinsey system for grading homosexuality and heterosexuality, grade one meant pure heterosexuality and grade six meant pure homosexuality; but with Duberman's males, sex is six or nothing.

Foster Gunnison Jr., the most conservative of Duberman's personalities, recognized himself as homosexual at the advanced age of 20, and followed this recognition with a life of near-perfect chastity. The sexual orientation of Duberman's three other men was entirely clear in childhood. Craig Rodwell (who died of cancer this past summer, at age 52) attended a Christian Science boarding school for "problem" boys in Chicago and found himself having some sort of prepubescent sex with fully half of the other "problems" in his class of ten. Ray "Sylvia" Rivera had sex with his cousin at the age of 7. And each of Duberman's males, Gunnison apart, had sex either as children or as early teenagers with adults. Jim Fouratt, the last of Duberman's males, traded sex for car rides during his teenage years in Providence, Rhode Island.

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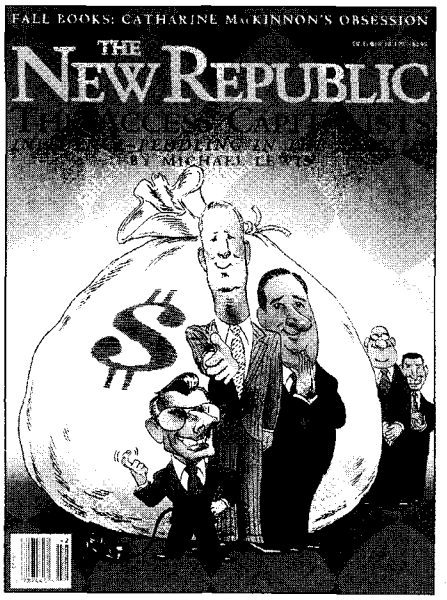

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In high school, young Rodwell used to cruise for gay men in Chicago. Rivera's experience was altogether extreme. His long-suffering Venezuelan grandmother brought him up in the New York area Spanish-speaking and working class and did her best to keep him on a reasonably normal track. But by fourth grade the boy was wearing makeup. In fifth grade he was seduced by one of his own teachers and was having sex with other men, too. At the age of 11, he ran away to live as a transvestite prostitute under the name "Sylvia" on Times Square, where his poor old granny used to hunt him down and one time even frightened off one of his johns, not that hounding the boy brought him home again.

We are not in the land of the bourgeois sexual ideal. Duberman keeps studiously cool in the face of his own tales, even if he knows that a percentage of his readers are clutching the walls merely to read that such lives exist. Sex between people of the same gender? Everything's O.K., his demeanor makes clear, and the liberal morality of our post-'68 era nods assent. And between youngsters and adults? We non-Ancient Greeks draw the line. But though Duberman normally feels no reluctance to wave his fist and to declare positions on the most contentious of issues, on this delicate topic he merely reports without judging, and his reporting shows that simple codes of morality never seem quite adequate to the human complexities of sex.

The men whose childhood stories he tells look back on their precocious experiences, and wistfulness suffuses them, the way it suffuses anyone whose early sexual experiences were halfway agreeable. The life that young Rodwell led at 14 or 15, cruising for men at the Chicago ballpark and in department stores and having sex in the toilet stalls of public men's rooms, strikes Rodwell the adult as "high adventure." Fouratt seems to have regarded his hitchhiker escapades as a lark. Even about Rivera, Duberman says that prostitution at Times Square made him feel "elated" and "euphoric"—though it's true that on another page, Rivera appears to have expressed a hope in his adult years that other boys won't have to go through what he endured—or rather "she," in the pronoun that Duberman considerately chooses to employ.

The bad part for these men wasn't the sex, it was the circumstances. Fouratt was one time taken by a group of men and raped and beaten. Rodwell's early experiences were especially awful. One of his adult lovers was arrested for having sex with boys and committed suicide. Another of his adult lovers was sentenced to five years for the crime of consorting with Rodwell himself, who was likewise arrested, though he wasn't prosecuted. When he got to be 18, in 1958, Rodwell moved to New York, and soon enough he was arrested once again, this time for wearing too small a bikini at the Riis Park beach in Queens, and arrest led to a beating and three days in jail.

He went cruising for a lover in Washington Square, was arrested again, and again ended up beaten. He took a summer job at the elite gay men's resort at Fire Island, and there, too, the shadow of official repression fell everywhere, and from time to time the police raided the resort and chained the men one to another and to a telephone pole in gangs as large as thirty or forty, until a police launch brought them to be booked and fined on the mainland. And over these ugly and humiliating scenes in Chicago, Providence, New York and Fire Island hovered clouds of anguish, sometimes of mental imbalance.

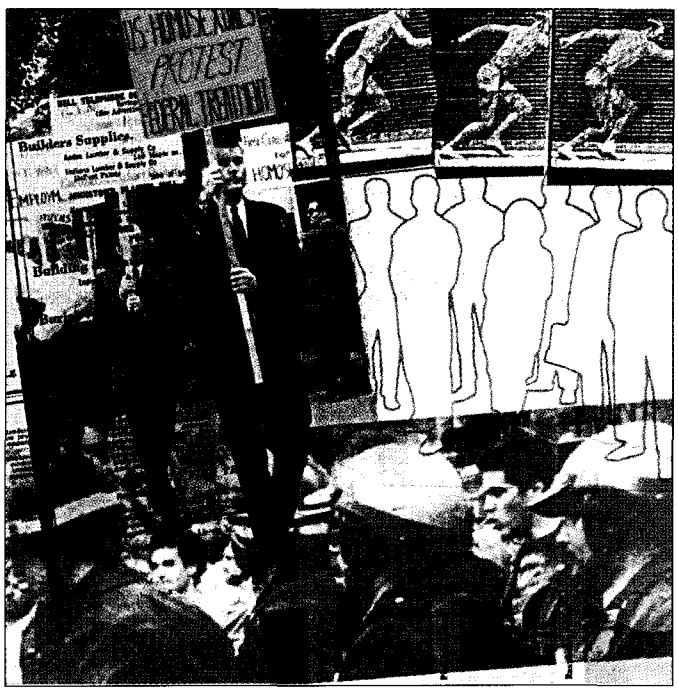

ILLUSTRATION BY TOM PRESTON FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Rodwell tried to kill himself twice and spent a month at the psychiatric ward at Bellevue. Rivera spent two months there and tried to commit suicide at least once. Fouratt attempted suicide. Whether or not suicide figures as a larger factor among homosexuals than among other people (which is one of the many unresolved issues that continue to surround the debate over homosexuality), the urge to die does seem to pop up pretty often in the bitter tales that Duberman has collected.

The pioneers of the modern gay movement had to ask themselves some very hard questions about the inner anguish and the suicidal impulses. For what if the predicament of homosexuals was finally a function of their own mental illness, of the "psychopathic personality disorders" that military psychiatrists began to warn of back in 1942? What if homosexuality was an insanity? The modern gay movement was founded in a small way in 1950 in Los Angeles by maybe a dozen men, some of them with Communist Party connections (along with Rudi Gernreich, the fashion designer whose own contribution to the radicalism of the '60s was the famously funny-looking women's topless swimsuit). These men put together a semi-clandestine organization with a name drawn from a medieval secret fraternity, the Mattachine Society, to advance the rights of homosexuals, and the Mattachine addressed the psychological question at once. The members proposed that, in Duberman's summary, "most gays had internalized the society's negative judgment of them as 'sick,'" but in reality they weren't crazy at all and were, instead, "a legitimate minority living within a hostile mainstream culture." Those were advanced views for the 1950s.

But the Mattachine fell into an internal squabble over organizational matters, the Communist sympathizers were driven out, some of the early glamour wore off and things went from bad to pathetic when the Mattachine's national center got converted into a front for a San Francisco businessman's gay sex club and porno theater. The Mattachine, as Duberman describes it, settled into a cautious placidity. Typical meetings of Mattachine's entirely proper and legitimate New York section in, say, 1960 featured middle-aged men in business suits filing into a room provided by Freedom House, the human rights group, to listen respectfully to psychiatric experts, "who pontificated at length about the entitlement of homosexuals to civil rights *even though their sexual development might have* been distorted."

Yet if gays were not only persecuted by police and condemned by the great religions but also were even in their own eyes ill, how were they going to organize themselves to press for civil rights? They needed reservoirs of self-confidence and had not a drop. They could hardly turn

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to the American Psychiatric Association, which as late as 1973 insisted formally on seeing homosexuality as a psychological disorder. A leader of the far-from-placid Mattachine Society of Washington, D.C., Frank Kameny—a hero of the movement, though not among the ones who are profiled in Duberman's book—drew the unavoidable conclusion as early as 1964. "The entire movement," he said, "is going to stand or fall upon the question of whether homosexuality is a sickness, and upon our taking a firm stand on it."

Among the people whom Duberman does describe at length, Foster Gunnison in particular set out during the middle '60s to prepare the ground for that kind of rigorous stand in the years to come. Gunnison had a sophisticated business background, derived from his years working for his father's prefabricated construction company, which he put to use trying to unite the several tiny and scattered gay organizations: Mattachine, the Daughters of Bilitis, which was Mattachine's slightly younger lesbian sister, a number of regional groups. And he had courage. Together with Rodwell, Gunnison was one of the very few who went each year, beginning in 1965, to picket the White House for "Equal Rights for Homosexuals" and to endure the contempt of the public and the snickering of the press.

But organizing came hard. The leaders of gay groups in the early and middle '60s tended to be, for easily imagined reasons, hard-bitten individualists. No particular style or outlook drew them together. Gunnison himself, in matters of dress, was a partisan of Brooks Brothers. His political ideas were strictly conservative, apart from his militant advocacy of what was still called the "homophile" cause. He wanted full acceptance of homosexuality by conventional society, but he hoped that society, once it took that radical step, would in all other ways remain conventional still. He had no use for Communists, and as for "beatniks and other professional nonconformists," he worried that if people like that ever got hold of the movement, all was lost.

To go plunging into the beatnik and left-wing depths of downtown New York was, however, the gay movement's inescapable destiny. I suppose that New York's theater world has always had a gay tinge; clever and mordant drag shows have been an ancient staple in the downtown Manhattan streets for as long as anyone can remember. But in the course of the '60s that old downtown tinge took on a fatefully deeper hue. You can practically see the change creeping across the background of Duberman's collective biographies.

Fouratt left his home in Providence and in 1961 found his way, via a doomed effort at joining the Catholic priesthood, to the New York theater, and he hung out at places like the Caffè Cino in the Village, where the atmosphere was such that Joe Cino himself, the proprietor (and soon enough another suicide), used to call out, "Get real, Mary!" to any shy gay performer who kept his gayness under wraps. And as this sort of avant-garde marched steadily avant, its population and even its geography tended to grow, until whole city blocks in Greenwich Village and on the Lower East Side took on the freaky theater quality of exhibition and provocation.

Duberman wants us to remember that not everything in the new countercultural neighborhoods meant new and exemplary attitudes toward homosexuality. Even on the extreme left, in the young people's oases that lay somewhere beyond the hidebound downtown Communists and Trotskyists (whose principal party, the Socialist Workers, retained a ban against homosexuals until 1970), you couldn't count on enlightened behavior. Fouratt went from the theater to the theatrical politics of the group around Abbie Hoffman, who was the Pan of St. Mark's Place in the mid-'60s. It was Fouratt—the "original flower child," in Hoffman's appreciative phrase—who thought up the clever stunt of dropping dollar bills on the New York Stock Exchange, which made Hoffman famous. He helped put together the Central Park Be-In of 1967 and a few other trippy efforts to raise political protest to the plane of the Zen surreal, where the sexual atmosphere was supposed to be open to every sensual possibility, closed to none, in a spirit that might be called the polymorphous transcendental.

But the truth about polymorphous transcendentalism was sometimes disappointing. Duberman tells us that Hoffman used to drop in on his buddy Fouratt and snub his buddy's lover, as if a homosexual couple was too much for even Pan to abide. Karla Jay was a student at Columbia University's Barnard College in the late '60s, on her way to a career as an academic literary scholar, and had similar unhappy experiences in an uptown student version. A few days before the Latin Quarter erupted in Paris, the Columbia students staged a grand-scale uprising of their own, which led to a long, violent strike that was mostly over issues of civil rights and the war in Vietnam, but also echoed with protests against the ordinary sexual conventions of university life. Yet there, too, on the uptown barricades, the revolution against sexual convention kept ending up in outbreaks of male hetero-inanity, and the radicalized young women gagged in unison and raced off to organize the consciousness-raising groups of the early New York feminist movement. Jay made her way into an influential little group called Redstockings, which was the epitome of every radical feminist idea; and even there she felt less than perfectly at home.

Duberman is pretty severe about these sundry left-wing failings. But as you read his account, it's easy enough to see that, via the hippie sensual ideal (which helped overthrow the rule of tradition in sexual customs), then via the feminist challenge (which overthrew the overthrow), then via an unexpected shimmer of the homoerotic that began to run through some of the new women's organizations, the question of homosexuality was creeping up on every side. Already in the hippie sensibility, bisexuality glowed with special prestige, roughly the way that taking ever stronger drugs was seen as evidence of spiritual superiority. In the pre-guerrilla revolutionary cells of the Weather Underground, bisexuality became, by the early months of 1969, positively mandatory, enforced on all the prospective warriors of the impending armed revolt. Every month that passed seemed to bring crashing to the ground some taboo or inhibition that used to be regarded as basic to civilization. And to raise a few modest questions about homosexuality in that kind of environment became ever easier, ever less avoidable.

Any number of challenges began cropping up within the already existing semi-underground world of gay society—within, for instance, the world of New York lesbianism. This was not a very ancient world. According to the historians of lesbianism, the first more or less modern lesbian circles in the United States arose only in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the custom in those early circles was to re-create lesbian versions of the him-and-her gender distinctions of the larger world. Another of the social histories-from-below that has recently been published is a book that innocently carries the fetishistic title *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: The History of a Lesbian Community*, by Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy and Madeline D. Davis, which is an academic study in the true Thompsonian vein, full of arcane detail and French-inspired invocations of colonial oppression and anti-colonial resistance; and from the tiny piled-up facts and personal interviews you can see in spectacular exactitude what the pre-'68-era lesbian world tended to be like.

The book describes the lesbian scene

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in Buffalo between the late 1930s and the early 1960s, where the women regarded themselves either as "butches" (alternatively, "lesbians," "stud broads," "diesel dykes" and "truck drivers") or as "femmes" (alternatively, "girlfriends" and "ladies"). Everyone knew her proper place and dressed accordingly and made love either "actively" as butches or "passively" as femmes. And the attitude toward this sort of homosexual convention on the part of the new young generation of hippie-minded radical young women circa '68 can be pictured in an instant. Duberman's Jay, having been dismayed first by the swaggering machos of the student left, then by the radical feminists, wandered into the Manhattan lesbian bars and was immediately asked: Which are you, butch or femme? Neither, thank you. She was something new, a young woman who was attracted to women (as well as, in those days, to men) yet was not at all attracted to the idea of playing a single fixed sexual role that might be defined by anyone but herself. By the late '60s personalities like that were becoming so common as practically to be a sociological category.

A different kind of challenge to homosexual tradition turned up in the old-line homophile groups. As early as 1961, young Rodwell, the Mattachine firebrand, showed up with six other rebellious souls to demonstrate at Manhattan's Whitehall Street draft board against the army's anti-gay policy—which was the kind of action that made the business suit rank and file squirm with dread. In 1967 Rodwell opened the Oscar Wilde Memorial Bookshop in the Village as a serious movement center, which upset some of the older-style homosexuals still again, if only because the store claimed to be gay yet failed to carry the pornography that gay bookshops had always carried before.

And while these several historic changes worked their way through the mostly underground New York gay world, one other unmistakable transformation went spreading through the uptown and downtown streets during the several months before the historic riot. You can see it in the background of some of Duberman's stories. The uptown student politicos and the downtown freaks—the two wings of the New York counterculture—kept bumping up against the police department, and the bumps were getting sharper.

Something very close to rioting broke out a couple of times in the midtown streets in the fall of 1967 when top figures from the Lyndon Johnson administration came to speak at Manhattan hotels. In March 1968 some fairly rough fighting broke out at Grand Central Station during one of Abbie Hoffman's demonstrations—with Fouratt in faithful attendance, half-disgusted at Hoffman's cynical willingness to conjure up violent situations. A month later, when the Columbia insurrection took place, battles between students and police were such that, on a single miserable day, 712 people were arrested and 148 got themselves clobbered by police billy clubs and blackjacks badly enough to count as injured, and some of the police were injured, too, and it was a wonder that no one was killed.

The next fall there was an uprising at City College further uptown, then a bigger and more violent one in the spring of '69, led by the black students. The New York Black Panther Party had gotten organized by then and was hard at work in Brooklyn and the Bronx. Already the Panthers had quietly launched a guerrilla war, with policemen as their victims. Demonstrations went on throughout the spring on behalf of twenty-one Panthers who had been accused of a hair-raising conspiracy to blow up sites around the city, and the demonstrations sometimes drifted into scenes of mass vandalism with a lot of broken windows and scuffling with the police.

By June 1969, when the fateful incident at the Stonewall Inn finally occurred, these many events guaranteed that the sidewalks of a place like Sheridan Square would at any time of night or day be filled with all sorts of impossibly hip young veterans of God knows how many nasty standoffs with the police, and any number of those young people were bound to have mused at length over what seemed like an impending citywide hippie-black-Latino-student insurrection—the uprising that was supposed to take place along the uptown-downtown double axes of East and West 116th Street, East and West 8th Street. The New York Commune, it was going to be, or maybe the Battle of Algiers.

The Stonewall Inn on Christopher Street, just west of West Eighth, stood on the downtown axis, next door to the Lion's Head, the writers' bar. The Stonewall catered to male gays, but not exactly to the Fire Island elite. Fouratt and Rodwell would never have been caught dead there; they regarded the Stonewall as a hangout for unsavory "chicken hawks," older men on the prowl for boy prostitutes—though Duberman, no stranger to the bar, is reluctant to accept that description. Nobody disputes the filthiness of the place. The liquor was bootlegged or hijacked, and in either event was watered-down. The glasses were rinsed in the kind of water that will sooner or later give you hepatitis. But the Stonewall was not lacking in color. The bar was one of the gnarly marvels that only great cities can produce. The classic nineteenth-century novelists lived and breathed to write about such places.

Mafia guys from the neighborhood were the owners and managers—though the guys in question were, it turns out, fairly queer themselves. A gangster named Petey used to hang out at the bar wearing a black shirt and a tie, like any movie hoodlum, except that he kept falling in love with drag queens like "the beautiful Desiree" and "blond Harlow." The Stonewall was not a drag queen bar (the Washington Square Bar on Third Street and Broadway was the drag queen bar), which meant that, at the Stonewall, only a few full-time transvestites might be hanging around, though others were camped out across the street in the little park. But drag queening has its degrees. At the Stonewall, there were "scare drag queens"—these were "boys who looked like girls but who you knew were boys"—and there were "flame" queens, who wore make-up and teased their hair but dressed in male clothes, sort of.

A chubby queen named Maggie Jiggs stood behind the bar and poured the drinks and dealt acid and uppers. The chinos-and-penny loafer crowd stood around listening to Motown on the jukebox. And regularly, as just another dab of color, blue-uniformed police from the Sixth Precinct—known not quite fondly as "Alice Blue Gown" and other names—staged their raids. New York State statute required that everyone wear at least three pieces of clothing "appropriate to one's gender," which was a requirement designed precisely to suppress bars like the Stonewall Inn, where clothing and gender kept wandering off in separate directions. Alice Blue Gown would round up the cross-dressers along with some of the employees and anyone who lacked I.D., and the bar would be padlocked for the night—though never for good, since the queer Mafia kept the crooked precinct well supplied with bribes, and locking the doors forever would have impoverished all and sundry.

Duberman leads us with poker-faced affection through the historic evening by following the single one of his people who happened to be drinking at the bar on the historic night. This person was Sylvia Rivera, the drag queen. By June 1969 Sylvia was an upstanding citizen, almost, living in New Jersey with her lover, Gary. She had been invited to a birthday party for another transvestite, Marsha P. Johnson, who him/herself went on to play a significant role in the early super-radical moments of the gay liberation movement. Sylvia

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decided to pass up Marsha's party. But the whole detailed cityscape portrait of the Stonewall Inn is Duberman's moment of narrative glory, and I will let him grandly escort Sylvia to the bar:

> It wasn't that she was mad at Marsha; she simply felt strung out. She had been working as an accounting clerk in a Jersey City chain-store warehouse, keeping tally sheets of what the truckers took out—a good job with a good boss who let her wear face makeup whenever she felt like it. But it was an 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. shift, Sundays through Thursdays, all-night stints that kept her away from her friends on the street and decidedly short of the cash she had made from hustling.
>
> Yes, she wanted to clean up her act and start leading a "normal" life. But she hadn't counted on missing the money so much, or on her drug habit persisting—and $67 a week in take-home pay just wasn't doing it. So she and her lover, Gary, decided to piece out their income with a side gig—passing bad checks—and on June 27, a Friday, they had just gotten back from papering Washington, D.C. The first news they heard on returning was about Judy Garland's funeral that very day, how 20,000 people had waited up to four hours in the blistering heat to view her body at Frank E. Campbell's funeral home on Madison Avenue and Eighty-First Street. The news sent a melodramatic shiver up Sylvia's spine, and she decided to become "completely hysterical." "It's the end of an era," she tearfully announced. "The greatest singer, the greatest actress of my childhood is no more. Never again 'Over the Rainbow'"—here Sylvia sobbed loudly—"no one left to look up to."
>
> No, she was not going to Marsha's party. She would stay home, light her consoling religious candles.... But then the phone rang and her buddy Tammy Novak—who sounded more stoned than usual—*insisted* that Sylvia and Gary join her later that night at the Stonewall. Sylvia hesitated. If she was going out at all—"Was it all right to dance with the martyred Judy not cold in her grave?"—she would go to Washington Square. She had never been crazy about the Stonewall, she reminded Tammy: men in makeup were tolerated there, but not exactly cherished. And if she was going to go out, she wanted to *vent*—to be just as outrageous, as grief-stricken, as makeup would allow. But Tammy absolutely *refused* to take no for an answer and so Sylvia, moaning theatrically, gave in. She popped a black beauty and she and Gary headed downtown.

It got to be 1:20 in the morning, prime time at Sheridan Square. Eight officers of the Sixth Precinct burst into the bar, as they had always burst before. Except the great mystery of historical change had already occurred, and because of the slow work of the old-fashioned homophile political organizations, or because of the hippie piety about an all-accepting sexual spirituality, or because of the winds of insurrection and impudence that were blowing around the world, or because the feminists had succeeded in making everyone skeptical about traditional sexual relations, or for all of these reasons, the roomful of drinkers who should have gulped and blinked in fear and humiliation at the sight of Alice Blue Gown instead grew cold and mocking.

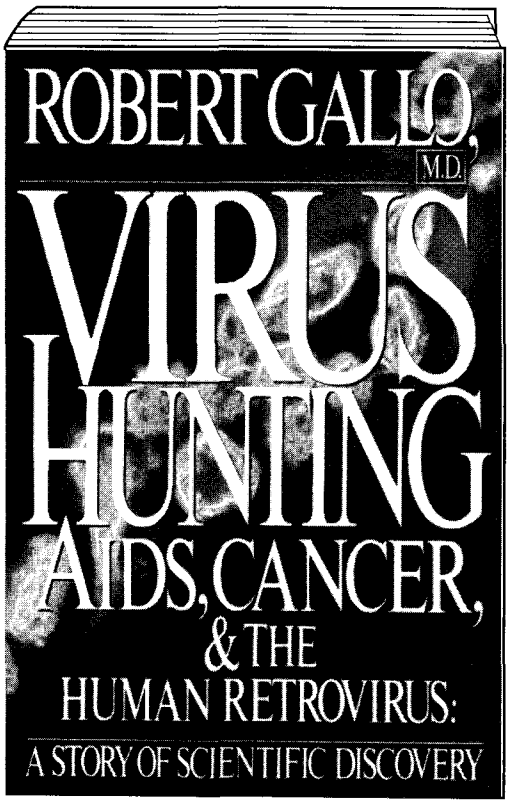
The police checked I.D.s and told some of the people that they could leave. When these lucky persons emerged from the bar to Christopher Street, they saw that a crowd had gathered on the sidewalk, and the campier people from the bar struck starlet poses as they exited the door, and the crowd cheered. A paddy wagon pulled up and the cheers turned to boos. Who was that random nighttime crowd? The exact social makeup of riotous crowds (we partisans of history from below disdain the tainted word "mob") was always the most central of questions for the historians. We know that not everybody pouring out of the bar or walking down Christopher Street at that instant came from Rivera's world of the stoned-out petty chumps and homeless prostitutes. Nor were they all of them the chinos-and-penny loafers homosexuals of the timid middle class.

Craig Rodwell was, by June '69, nicely established as a Greenwich Village store-owner, and here by chance he happened to become, strolling down the sidewalk, a distinguished member of the riotous assemblage. By happy coincidence here came Jim Fouratt, who was not only fairly

"After all the sound and fury...."

For years, front-page headlines described Robert Gallo as the brilliant but "controversial" scientist accused of scientific misconduct. Alan Alda recently portrayed him as the sinister scientist who nonetheless discovered the cause of AIDS and developed the all-important blood test.

On November 11, 1993, close to a decade after allegations of wrongdoing were first made in the press, all charges against Gallo were dropped. After an exhaustive investigation of his lab's contested AIDS research, investigators wrote:



"One might anticipate...that after all the sound and fury, there would be at least a residue of palpable wrongdoing. That is not the case."

Nobel Prize winner Freeman Dyson has compared the harassment of Robert Gallo with the case of Robert Oppenheimer:

"In both cases a great man [was] harassed and punished for offenses that are, in comparison with his achievements and his services to society, trivial."

Only one book tells the true story of the discovery of the AIDS virus.

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well known as an actor and as a mover in the permanent Yippie revolution but had taken a job high up at CBS, promoting rock music. Another of the narrative histories of the modern gay movement, a collection of interviews by Eric Marcus with the Thompsonian title *Making History: The Struggle for Gay and Lesbian Equal Rights 1945-1990* (but with a strictly popular oral-history format) shines a spotlight on some additional faces in that late-night crowd.

Among the lucky unarrested persons stumbling up to the sidewalk from the bar was Morty Manford, a famous figure from the Columbia student left in those days, who would soon enough emerge as a notorious architect of gay rights "zap" hecklings against Mayor John Lindsay. Walking down the street was Vito Russo, a well-known film historian in the years to come. Here briefly was Martha Shelley, a secretary at Columbia who played a major role in the Daughters of Bilitis, giving a late-night street tour to a couple of visiting lesbians. ("What's going on here?" her visitors asked. "Oh, it's a riot. These things happen in New York all the time.") In still another book I notice that one of the future personalities in the gay-rights-for-service-people movement also happened by (though it's not clear exactly when), dressed in his bell-bottoms and love beads and not looking like the former Air Force sergeant that he actually was. So there were political skills and famous careers in that random late-night crowd. This was Manhattan!

Duberman hasn't been able to establish exactly what set off the riot, but he knows that the police were loading the wagon with transvestites when somebody saw, in the historian's description, "a leg, poured into nylons and sporting a high heel, shoot out of the back of the paddy wagon into the chest of a cop, throwing him backwards." Transvestites came leaping out of the wagon. Somebody was shouting, "Nobody's gonna fuck with me!" Stones, bottles and coins flew through the air. The police fled into the bar. By then the crowd was feeling its power. The bar window broke. Some fool in the crowd poured lighter fluid and tried to set the place on fire.

Inside the bar, the police called for reinforcements from the Tactical Patrol Force, who were, among all the units of the New York Police Department, the most widely feared by everyone with experience in the political demonstrations of the time. TPFers were beefy men, bristly with clubs, guns and tear gas canisters, and when they marched in formation they wore helmets and visors. Duberman compares them to Roman legionnaires. Two dozen of these legionnaires showed up on Christopher Street. They linked arms and advanced up the block, looking like what anyone in 1969 would have instantly called scary mothers.

But as this force moved forward, the crowd merely doubled back and regrouped. A few people circled around the block to harass the legionnaires from the rear, shouting and throwing things. And so Alice Blue Gown, the beefy TPF mothers, the drugged-out transvestites, the loafers-and-chinos set, the lesbians, the queer Mafia, the flame queens, the scare drag queens, the gay Yippies, the resentful discharged veterans of the United States Armed Forces, the beatniks, the intellectuals, the student activists, the guitar-pickers and the homeless riffraff of the little downtown park—this explosive crowd, living testimony to the sexual chaos of humble humanity, squared off in the street, and fumes of scorn and joy and sexual titillation went mixing with the smoke from the burning trash cans.

The TPFers whirled around. They found themselves face to face with what Duberman describes as "a chorus line of mocking queens, their arms clasped around each other, kicking their heels in the air Rockettes-style and singing at the tops of their sardonic voices":

> We are the Stonewall girls
> We wear our hair in curls
> We wear no underwear
> We show our pubic hair...
> We wear our dungarees
> Above our nelly knees!

Talk about weird revolutionary slogans! People were hurling rocks and bricks. The police grabbed someone off the sidewalk and beat him, though the poor victim turned out to be Dave Van Ronk, the folk singer and not a homosexual, who happened to be drinking at the Lion's Head.

Fouratt and maybe a few others in the crowd tried to cool things down, which was a decent thing to do—though Fouratt was also calling in his own reinforcements from among the city's radical left (some of whom responded, others not), which must have kept the tensions high. Rodwell was calling in the press. And though the fighting died off after a couple of hours, on the next day and for two more days after that, the confrontations resumed, along with the derisory singing and the kick-lines. Then it rained and there was peace—only to break out into angry standoffs once again, when the rains cleared and *The Village Voice* came out with a suitably incendiary issue.

The actual amount of violence from either side doesn't seem to have been especially high after the initial moment—not compared to the civil rights movement in the South, in which some twenty-eight people were killed over the course of the '60s, nor compared to the Tlatelolco massacre in Mexico, nor to the May '68 fighting at the Sorbonne, nor even to the Columbia strike a little more than a year earlier, where that same TPF had pretty much gone on a rampage. Yet those June and July '69 crowds in Greenwich Village were furious even so. And their fury had an odd quality: it didn't fade.

II.

Exactly why that was, why the noise from that riot went on resonating during the months after Sheridan Square was finally cleared, why those days of street scuffling afterward ascended into the zones of legend and myth, why the annual June commemorations under the name of "Gay Pride" or "Gay Freedom" (as proposed by Rodwell) gradually became, as Randy Shilts says, "the high holy day of the national gay movement," why the history of homosexuality neatly divides into pre-Stonewall and post-Stonewall eras, not just in the United States but in a variety of countries—that is easy enough to see, if you let yourself look through empathetic eyes.

Duberman takes pains to show that the riot at Sheridan Square was not, in fact, the first bit of trouble on the street between gays and the police. In San Francisco as early as 1966, three days of fighting followed a police raid on a gay hangout called Compton's Cafeteria, and there had been other incidents, and the West Coast marched several steps ahead of the East. Only those early West Coast developments took place in too staid a time, and the noise from those protests did not penetrate beyond a few small California precincts.

That was not a problem in the summer of 1969. Life was a loudspeaker that year. And what everyone—some people, anyway—heard at the riot on Christopher Street was distinctly new. It was the sound of voices tuned to a different pitch, airing emotions that had never been aired publicly before. And in response to that sound, around the country the many homosexuals who for so long had lived in secrecy or in self-repression seem to have begun undergoing, one by one, their own personal Stonewall insurrections, released by public events into a personal "no" that by the intensity of its tone and the novelty of its cry tended then and tends even now to make anyone standing nearby gape with astonishment. For who outside of the world of the homosexuals could have known, until that moment,

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how much unhappiness and despair were woven into that clandestine world, or how big that world would turn out to be?

Where precisely to channel the newly released energies once the six days of fighting were over was a bit of a problem. Ideas went into the riot, but they were shattered there, and did not come out again. The old homophile notion of achieving rights for gays along the dignified lines of the old pre-Black Power civil rights movement was discredited in a nanosecond. During the nights and days of Christopher Street agitation, the Mattachine Society posted leaflets in the Village telling gay people to cool it. But cooling it was exactly what whole crowds on the sidewalk no longer wished to do. That most mysterious of social changes, a mass instantaneous radicalization, had taken place.

Civil rights liberalism was already a speck receding into the distance, and the only remaining question was which among several varieties of radical leftism would those suddenly fired-up young people seize on for their own. Looking back on those times, you might think the new gay militants would naturally have lined up with the libertarian left and found some way of saying, along with Cohn-Bendit, "Nobody is responsible for you! *You* are responsible for yourselves!" The old-line anarchists had their little foothold in the downtown theater avant-garde—the Living Theater was anarchist—and even the French Situationists had their New York branch, and to go in one of those directions would not have been inconceivable.

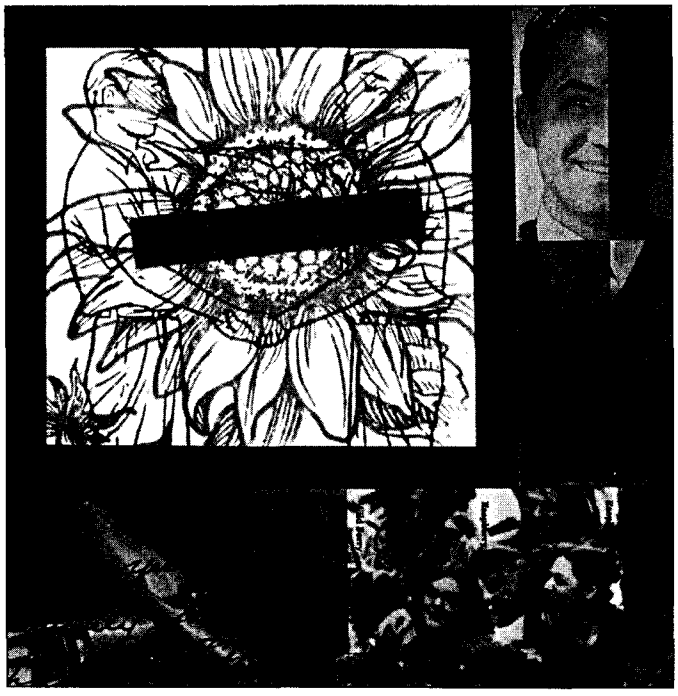

ILLUSTRATION BY TOM PRESTON FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

But in the history of the American youth movement, June 1969 was precisely the month in which the libertarian and radical democratic ideas went down to their miserable, final defeat. Students for a Democratic Society fell apart that month in a convention in Chicago, and over the spot where SDS once reigned arose a newer impulse that was dominated by the round enigmatic face of Mao Zedong and the idea of joining, in Mao's phrase, "the raging tide of the people of the world against the U.S. aggressors." And if the proposed new raging tide seemed, at first glance, to leave very little room for Americans of any sort, on second glance there was, in fact, an honored place for Americans in the new idea, so long as they could show themselves to be the victims, and not the beneficiaries, of the imperialist system.

The Chicago SDS convention and a second convention a few days later in Oakland, hosted by the Panthers, set out to identify the several elements of American life that could plausibly claim to stand outside the privileged circle of imperialist freedom and prosperity, and to group these elements into an "American Liberation Front" that would take its proper place behind the leadership of Fidel Castro and the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam and Mao (though it's true that, in Oakland, some preferred Brezhnev). The new idea was a national variation on the New York insurrection that so many people kept expecting to take place.

It pictured a network of semi-Bolshevized ethnic street gangs headed by the Panthers, and behind them the Young Lords Party among Puerto Ricans, the Brown Berets among Mexican-Americans, the Young Patriots of Chicago among working-class whites, the Chinese-American Maoists and any number of other groups reaching all the way to the extreme left of the not yet ethnically divided student movement and the dope-smoking Yippie outlaws. And with these very peculiar ideas in the air, Fouratt and Martha Shelley and some of the other faces from the crowd at Sheridan Square broke off from the straight-laced old homophile organizations to put together their own gay wing of the revolutionary alliance in the form of the Gay Liberation Front, which was a spectacularly novel idea.

Needless to say, not everyone in the older homophile circles burst into applause at the notion of enlisting the gay movement in the world crusade led by Mao. Even Duberman, the anti-anti-Communist, feels a genuine compassion for the plight of poor old Foster Gunnison in this astonishing new post-Stonewall circumstance. The conservative nuts-and-bolts hero of the older homophile movement had to stand back and watch as his own worst nightmares about commies and nonconformists materialized into real life packed auditoriums. Gunnison showed up at gay meetings where he wasn't known, and people took him to be some kind of police spy and saw him to the door.

For among the younger people who were just now coming out as homosexuals, what was the homophile past? Brooks Brothers, what was that? The idea of forming a liberation front and aligning with Panthers and Mao and the Viet Cong and Castro: *that* was the notion of the hour, even if Shelley and some of the other participants harbored a few discreet reservations at the time. Shilts tells us that Gay Liberation Fronts arose "in every major city in the United States." New gay newspapers spread the news. And the gap that opened between the brand new gay militance and the older dogged homophile campaign was, I suspect, even more cavernous than the gap that had opened perhaps a year or two earlier between the Negro civil rights movement of the past and the Black Power movement of what looked like the future.

Thus the gay revolution got off on a very awkward foot. The proposed international allies of the new gay movement could not have been more disastrously chosen. Mao's Red Guards, as Shilts reminds us, "were known to castrate 'sexual degenerates' publicly." As for Castro's pathologies about homosexuality, these had already earned him an immortal place in the history of homophobia. Fouratt, in the same year that he helped found the GLF, also helped found the Venceremos Brigade to bring Yankee volunteers to toil in the Communist sugar fields—and when the time came to depart for the Caribbean and start cutting cane, the gay Yippie, as Duberman scrupulously records, found himself forbidden to participate, out of fear that a Christopher Street ebullience might contaminate the Fidelista ethic. At home in the United States, there was the continual embarrassment about the Black Panthers, whose own sexual ideas were other than progressive—not to

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mention that the Panthers, at their chilling California core, were murdering off their own comrades and shaking down the struggling black businesses of poor straitened Oakland, racketeer-style.

The new ideas about gay liberation were not exactly helpful from an organizational point of view, either. The basic notion of putting together a revolutionary coalition among groups deemed to be innocent of imperialist crime implied a system of defining people by their historic grievances, the grievances of blacks, of Latin and Asian immigrants and—by extension—of women and homosexuals. But grievance means fission, in the law of political organization. The Gay Liberation Front clung to the highly un-Bolshevik anti-elitism of the earlier New Left in regard to conducting its meetings and shaping its organization, which guaranteed bedlam; and the shape that bedlam took was a progressive fracturing along lines of sub-grievance and double-sub-grievance. GLF ecumenicism included women and men both, but the women quickly split off into a Women's Caucus, then the black and Hispanic women split off into their own group and the Hispanic women left to form "Las Buenas Amigas," who themselves were lucky not to splinter along lines of skin tone or Latin American country of origin, and the GLF was soon enough a memory.

Still, some inner essence of those early ideas clung to life, and adapted, and soon enough began to flourish. For deep within those several founding notions from 1969 you could already see, in germ, the fateful idea of ascribing everyone's personal traits and beliefs about politics and culture to the one or two ethnic and sexual factors that might constitute the basis for a historic grievance. There was already a tone of pious sympathy for the victimhood of each and all (except, of course, for the hetero-Euro-males). There was already the expectation that with sufficient pity and piety all around, the many victimized ethnic and gender personalities would form themselves into their respective "communities" under the banner of their respective "cultures," and the communities would generate a movement for a new society that was no longer pictured as worldwide Marxist-Leninist liberation nor even as libertarian socialism but was seen finally as a democracy of communities. Not liberty in the old sense, but "diversity" in the new sense.

The idea that came to be known as "identity politics" had, in short, made its entrance into American life. And if this idea slowly spread outward from the left-wing world into the easy liberal assumptions of well-meaning Americans on campuses everywhere and in the Democratic party, that was because, for all the silliness in the identity politics idea, and for all the crippling effects of reducing everybody's personality to two or three factors, and for all the kitschiness in the new idea of "cultures" and "communities," identity politics did address some very keen modern anxieties.

For look what the more radical young people, not just the gays, had gone through by the early 1970s. Huge crowds of young black people, having been catapulted by the civil rights revolution into the colleges and universities, found themselves hurtling into the blue yonder of an American middle class that their own parents had never dreamed of entering. Masses of young women, having stumbled onto the ability to pursue independent professional careers, were throwing aside the outdated ideas of their own mothers and were declaring themselves to be women of a bolder and more aggressive type than the world had ever seen. These people were nervous! And in the aftermath of the Stonewall riot, the radical young gays found themselves in circumstances that were still more extreme and unprecedented.

The young post-Stonewall gays were no longer merely coping with homosexuality, as gays had always done before, with a lowered head and a guilty conscience. By proclaiming homosexuality as their right, they were bound to feel that they had overthrown Catholicism or Protestantism or Judaism, as the case may be. They had overthrown mom and dad. Ten thousand years of repression crumpled at every step they took. They were free; and freedom was terrifying. They could no longer fall back on traditional religion or on the culture of their parents. They felt supremely alienated from what they imagined to be the main currents of American life (little realizing that they themselves were a main current). In which case, who exactly were they anymore? They were American rootlessness uprooted. And to people in that alarming circumstance, identity politics offered a consolation.

The new idea proclaimed itself to be a radicalism beyond all radicalisms; but its deeper message was a soothing, traditionalist reassurance. Identity politics taught that forthright radical homosexuals and other brave social pioneers did in fact dwell among the comforts of a noble community with the kind of ancient roots that flower into confident modern-day personalities. Or at least the homosexuals *would* dwell in such a community, if only they could demonstrate that the premises of identity politics were true both in general and in their own special case as homosexuals, and that community in the identity politics version was real and not just a slogan.

The tremendous outpouring of gay creative energy during the quarter-century after Stonewall, the sexualized art works, the solemnity about pornography, the efforts to work up a distinctively lesbian or homosexual aesthetic, the homosexual interpretations of literature, the rise of gay and lesbian studies as academic disciplines—these many notable features of recent times show, I think, how strongly people have felt the need to build up the gay culture that identity politics said must surely exist. And if in the atmosphere of excitement and revolution, it was sometimes very difficult to draw a line between the good new work that came of these efforts and the mass of bad new work; if a militant wind began to blow and accusations of bigotry and homophobia went careening around college lawns and everyone was taught to talk with the sweet, unctuous decorum of diplomats and to refrain from disparaging even the wildest of claims and political pretensions on the part of individuals who might be ethnically or sexually different from themselves—who could be surprised?

In the identity politics vision, where democracy is a matter of communities, and communities are defined by their culture, to criticize someone's cultural expression is to question the dignity and the rights of an entire population, which is a daunting thing to do. So there was a moral intimidation in the new idea. The intimidation spread a blanket of protection over the cheesiest renditions of old wives' superstitions and bad poetry and silly history. And there was, in the identity politics idea, a virtual guarantee of rejection on the part of a larger public, if only because to underline the gay identity has to mean underlining the sexual component, and one man's turn on is bound to be another man's gross out.

Arlene Stein, the editor of a new lesbian anthology, *Sisters, Sexperts, Queers: Beyond the Lesbian Nation*, ruefully notices a part of the problem in regard to the lesbian movement. "The paradox," she writes, "is that if we don't name our difference in explicitly sexual terms, we remain invisible as lesbians—but if we do name it we're typecast as little more than sexual beings, and the vast complexity of our lives disappears." But such is the allure of the identity politics paradox that even the author of those self-conscious and slightly embarrassed cautionary words has gone ahead and awarded herself, by the title of her own book, the honorific "sexpert," which anybody would

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like to be, though maybe not twenty-four hours a day.

At the "high holy day" Stonewall commemorations straight into the 1990s, the dour gay politicos would come marching by demanding civil rights. But in public demonstration of that same inbuilt paradox, next would come, row after row of them, the sexperts, naming their difference. Bare-chested young men danced erotically on flatbed trucks. Women marched by in masses with their blouses stripped off. Fetishists decked out in leather motorcycle caps and studded risqué leather pants came rolling along in still more trucks, followed by strangely flabby and obese sado-masochists who marched down the street literally flogging one another. Random persons paraded between floats in a pathos of individual isolation carrying placards of their own handmade construction that affirmed the strangest of all strange slogans: "Rectal Pride," "Vaginal Pride."

Because of the epidemic, a warm, sickly breeze of Thanatos blew across these public scenes. On the back of a flatbed truck bearing the grim banner "HIV-Positive" came yet another gaggle of handsome young men with sinuous arms and gleaming chests who seemed to be, still, soaring on a cloud of sexual exaltation, dancing seductively, almost as if beckoning to the crowd and crying out "Join us!" Those marches were a political protest, but by the paradox of identity politics, the marches were an erotic festival, too—despite everything, even death. For the parading marchers were making themselves sexual on the occasion of their merry and tragic and political "holy day" in the same way that Polish-Americans put on embroidered peasant costumes for the Pulaski Day parade.

A reign of terror was guaranteed to come of this even without the pressures of an epidemic. In any movement based on a cultural identity, sooner or later someone will always step forward to declare his own identity to be truer and more authentic than everyone else's. He will announce a grave impending threat to the collective identity, and on that basis will take into his own hands the right to make decisions for all, and to unmask the traitors, and to carry out the executions. One of the authors in the *Sisters, Sexperts, Queers* collection, Alisa Solomon, describes a fairly depressing zealotry against "ideological contamination" in some nether portions of the lesbian movement, where AIDS has not had to be a central concern. And if you throw in the epidemic, the threshold for genuine hysteria was bound to slide ever downward.

One of the political responses to the disease among gay activists—the formation of the group ACT-UP in 1987 to stage protests against irresponsible foot-dragging by the government and the pharmaceutical industry—reverted as if by instinct to the noisy style of the Stonewall-era movement, to good effect, at first. As someone has observed, there was, even in the origins of AIDS activism, that same gay social base in the New York theater, this time with Larry Kramer, the author of one of the first AIDS plays, *A Normal Heart*, as founding father. But theatricality is an inebriant, and once a large number of people had tasted its pleasures, there was nothing to keep the livelier types from acting up in other ways as well.

ACT-UP gave birth at the beginning of the '90s to a group with a broader mandate that called itself "Queer Nation"—whose name (like that of the "Lesbian Nation") resurrected Abbie Hoffman's old Yippie notion of the "Woodstock Nation," from the Woodstock rock festival of August 1969, a few weeks after the Stonewall riot. And with '69 resurrected on every side, the terror announced itself at once. You could see it not just in the internal campaigns against ideological contamination (which by then were an old story in the gay movement), nor just in ferocious condemnations of the Catholic Church and other implacable enemies of an enlightened sex education, but above all in public acts of retribution against the gay revolution's own inadequate partisans and ungrateful intended beneficiaries.

The "outing" of fellow homosexuals serves, in effect, to blackmail influential persons into helping the gay cause, as interpreted by the blackmailing "outer." Yes, there might be a personal or professional cost to the poor soul who has been "outed." The threat of getting blackmailed might discourage a timid gay person from a public career. The "outings" might sometimes manage to "out" individuals who were never really "in." But what is that to Robespierre? Show me a guillotine and I will show you a career ladder. Among the several books on gay themes that have recently been published is one called *Queer in America*, written by a public relations flack named Michelangelo Signorile, who went from the service industries of the Broadway gossip columns to a giddy career of Yippie agitprop in Queer Nation, where his proudest achievement, recounted in cheerful detail in his book, is to have become famous for harassing one of George Bush's assistant secretaries of defense. Signorile telephoned his chosen victim at home in the middle of the night and then, not liking the assistant secretary's way of talking, took it on himself to reveal this man's homosexuality to the world.

The same assistant secretary emerges in Shilts's study of gays in the military as a man who "was not particularly circumspect about his opposition to the gay policies" of the Pentagon and who may have used his high position to whisper liberal advice about gay issues to still higher officials in the Bush administration. But outing, as I figure it, is not really designed to advance the cause. Outing is a way of expressing what Shilts, in an irritated mood, calls "the deeper intolerance many gay radicals held toward anyone, heterosexual or homosexual, who did not subscribe to their rigid ideology." It is an act of supreme power, like a mob boss's power to "whack" some poor slob who falls down in his payments. And as in all reigns of terror, a fog of conspiracy theorizing drifts across the field in order to justify the most lurid of actions.

"There exists in America," we are told by the author of *Queer in America*, "what appears to be a brilliantly orchestrated, massive conspiracy to keep all homosexuals locked in the closet"—requiring, of course, the efforts of himself to destroy it. The components of this conspiracy are, as anyone could have guessed, "the media industry, centered in New York," "the political system, centered in Washington" and "the entertainment industry, centered in Hollywood," all of which are full of cowardly homosexuals who are eager to sell out the cause but who will soon enough meet the wrath of the militant queer avengers. Phrases from the McCarthy era pop up as if from the national id: "naming names," "is there an absolute right to privacy?" And we are reminded again what a shame it is that the great historian Richard Hofstadter died before he could add a post-'60s chapter about homosexual militancy to *The Paranoid Style in American Politics*.

Yet how is it that none of these embarrassments and misfortunes has managed to sink the gay movement? The organizational chaos of the Gay Liberation Front in the months after the Stonewall riot, the calamitous notion of allying at home and abroad with every pirate and tyrant who ran up a revolutionary flag, the invention of a kitschy cultural identity on the basis of sex and the ensuing campaigns to eroticize art and culture, the snarly air of intolerance radiating from the radicals, the parading fetishists, the maneuverings of the flacks and the blackmailers and the conspiracy theorists, not to mention the horrors of disease and the chill breeze of Republican presidential landslides: any one of these elements would have sufficed to sink a flimsier cause, exactly as happened to the

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larger New Left, in no time flat. But the gay ship was unsinkable.

For the gay movement's reason for being was always too clear and obvious to be ruined by some idiocy or other. It was a movement for the right to love. It was grand; nothing could pull it down. It took that other theme of the great nineteenth-century novels, after the eccentricity of city life—the theme of natural love bumping up against society's artificial laws and customs, bumping up even against death—and turned love's story into a crusade in the streets. The gay movement was the most romantic political campaign that ever existed. To prosper under the conditions of American life in the years after the Stonewall riot all that was needed was to announce the idea of gay rights—and followers were going to flock to the cause and were going to brush off the nonsense that came wafting from the daffier professors or the less scrupulous self-promoters, and still more followers were going to join the campaign, and the entire movement was going to advance in stages so clear and logical as to radiate a quality of sociological permanence.

The first of these stages, in the immediate aftermath of the Stonewall riot, was a gay twist on the hippie inspiration to go build geodesic dome communes in the Rocky Mountains, except that gay community-building confined itself in a practical spirit to the project of colonizing big-city neighborhoods. Ever since the 1910s in Greenwich Village, later in other cities, a few gay bars and other businesses had huddled together as a kind of avant-garde center or vice zone, and these few seamy streets now began to flourish into full-fledged, sprightly "gay ghettos"—fixtures of modern urban geography not just in Greenwich Village and in the Castro district in San Francisco, but in Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Miami, Seattle and other places, too.

An unlucky mix of factors in the '70s—the polymorphous transcendentalism of a gay hippie world that was never reined in by indignant feminists, the old-fashioned gay orgy scenes that now went on all but freed of police raids, the slightly sinister disco tone of postrevolutionary decadence and chemically improved ebullience—produced the big, delirious gay sex clubs, which proved to be a medical misfortune even before AIDS, and afterward became a catastrophe. But the view that gay communities depended on erotic extravaganzas was never quite true.

When the epidemic began noticeably to spread in the early '80s, it was the new neighborhoods and the neighborhood organizations that gave the activists some modest first mechanisms to begin the dismal task of organizing against the plague—even if those anti-AIDS mobilizations were always too weak and too late and involved a lot of intramural fighting. So the gay movement turned out to have a strictly practical side, and the people whose hearts did not beat for utopian glitter or for identity politics or for the cult of ecstasy discovered a grim sort of trade union usefulness in the new gay movement institutions. Perhaps they discovered a moral gravity in their gay affiliations, too, and time and disaster made the bonds between individuals and the movement grow tighter, not looser.

Within six months of the Stonewall riot, the more level-headed types split off from the GLF to form the Gay Activists Alliance, which was the GLF without the part about Fidel Castro and the Black Panthers; and from the GAA split off a still more establishment-oriented group that called itself the National Gay Task Force (with the word Lesbian added later); and each of these groups proved to be more powerful than the last. Yet neither the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force nor any other group ever managed to dominate the field of gay politics, nor did gay politics ever generate a single widely-accepted national leader—and this failure, which in the case of most political movements would signal weakness and fragility, seems to me to have been, in the case of the gay movement, a sign of strength. "There are no marshals and no leaders today!"

There was only the ideal model of a grass-roots insurgency, '68-style. By 1976, according to Shilts, a quarter of the country's campuses could claim a gay student organization—where there had been hardly any a decade earlier. Gay Democratic clubs took root in all of the biggest cities. Yet if there was a single dramatic proof of the movement's vitality, it came when the same movement began to assert a claim to citizenship in society as a whole and not just on the bohemian margins, and the gay campaign started cropping up in places that were inconceivably far removed from the Greenwich Village sidewalks. And so the movement that got its start among the kick-line queens at the Stonewall Inn and the hyper-revolutionary students of 1969 began to spring up spontaneously from deep within the ranks of the armed forces of the United States.

III.

Randy Shilts's study of that momentous development, *Conduct Unbecoming: Gays & Lesbians in the U.S. Military*, conforms to the same inspiration for history-by-interview and collective biography that you see in Martin Duberman's book and in some other histories of the gay movement—though Shilts goes at these interviews in a spirit of popular journalism, without any suggestion that he has pondered his links to the school of history from below or the international '68 style. Mostly the book is a heroic feat of documentation. Shilts has conducted 1,100 interviews, and he has worked these interviews up into 700 pages of stories and anecdotes, with each anecdote going on for perhaps a page and a half, then yielding to the next. A little less heroism might have been just as well. Yet those 1,100 interviews manage to unearth a hidden life that has been lived by many thousands of people under the most pitiable conditions, and by stringing one story to another Shilts is able to show that soldier after soldier has spun a variation on a single unvarying biographical theme.

This is the theme of a teenage boy or young man who is privately troubled by his attraction to other males, or else by his failure to feel much of a sexual urge at all. The boy or man would like to grow up in conventional masculine directions. So he does what any football coach would advise him to do: he enlists in the service, only to discover that his adolescent doubts and worries are becoming graver by the minute and that high school was bliss compared to the miseries of life in a uniform.

The young man finds himself more or less having an affair with another man, or he finds himself drawn to the bustle and the comradeship of the gay bars. It is the nature of military life to encourage a bit of homoerotic foolery—at any rate, a keen sentimental affection between buddies in a unit. Yet there are buddies and there are buddies, and some of the foolery is not just foolery, and for the soldier whose homoeroticism is the real thing, deep feelings turn out to be at stake, and the depth of emotion is exactly what must be concealed. So the young man gropes his way into a circle of other people with the same experience, and his circle of friends finds its way to still other hidden circles, and the result is like the gas and cable networks under the city streets, going everywhere, visible nowhere.

But then, if Shilts's research is to be believed, what a network this turns out to be! Each of the great ships in the U.S. Navy—though I suppose we knew about the Navy, didn't we?—seems to have had its own hidden gay subculture. Over the years, the "Connie girls" (i.e., boys) flourished aboard the *U.S.S. Constellation*, the "Easy girls" aboard the *U.S.S. Enterprise*, the "Rangerettes" aboard the *U.S.S.*

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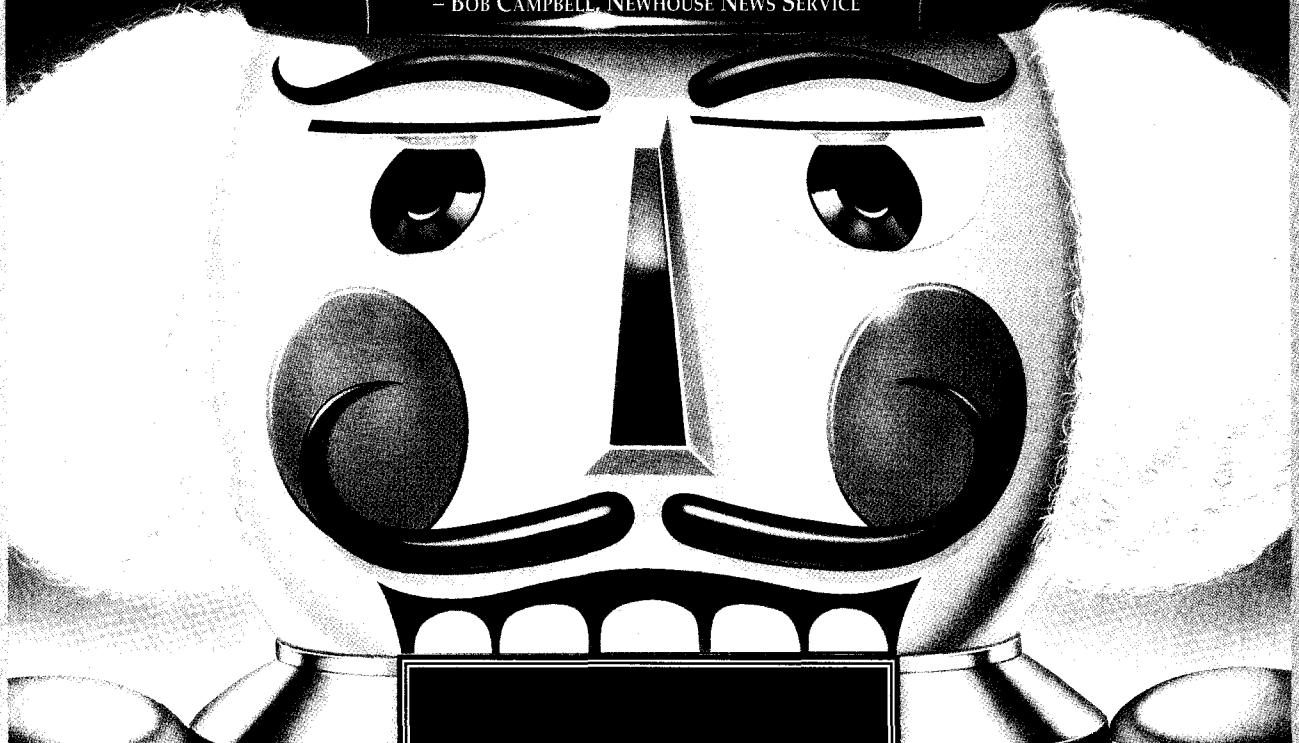
GEORGE BALANCHINE'S

THE NUTCRACKER

"SPECTACULAR.
THE CLASSIEST ENTERTAINMENT
OF THE HOLIDAY SEASON.
LAVISH AND ENCHANTING, FRESH AND VIBRANT."

– BOB CAMPBELL, NEWHOUSE NEWS SERVICE



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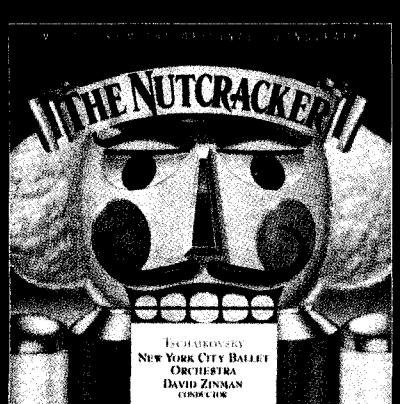
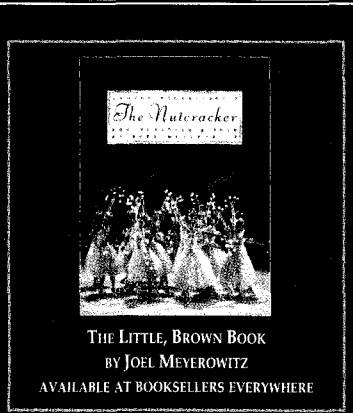
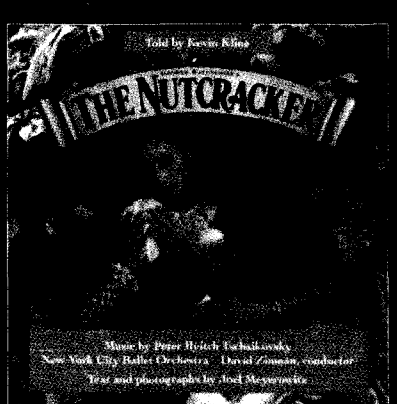




THE STORY,
TOLD BY KEVIN KLINE



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Ranger. The *John F. Kennedy* was at one time known to some as the "Jackie O," the *Dwight D. Eisenhower* as the "Mamie." According to Shilts's information, in the late '70s fully 60 percent of the crew was homosexual on the *U.S.S. La Salle*, "the gayest ship in the Navy," which steamed into the Persian Gulf and met up with some merry Arab oil princes, and quite a time was had by all.

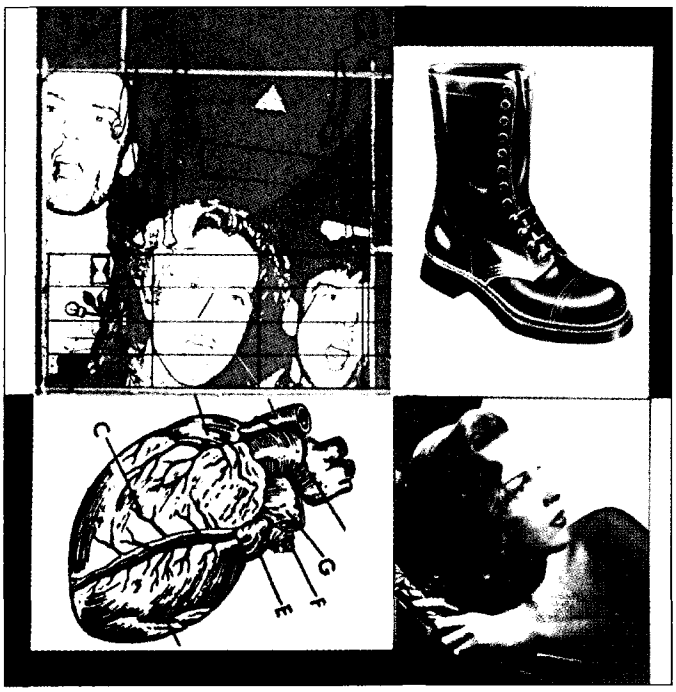
The olive drab Pentagon, seen through Shilts's lens, looms as a giant pink triangle of homosexuality. There was once a men's room in corridor six of the Pentagon where "men literally stood in line outside the stalls during the lunch hour, waiting their turn to engage in some hanky-panky." Nor is homosexuality confined to the humbler ranks. "Every service has had at least one gay person at four-star rank since 1981, and at least one gay man has served on the Joint Chiefs of Staff in that time." As for the women, according to some lesbian sources that Shilts cites, the number of lesbians in uniform has never sunk beneath a full 25 percent of the female population, which might seem a lot except in comparison to the amazing days of the Second World War, when lesbians accounted for fully 80 percent of the women, and it was heterosexuals who comprised the small minority.

Seven hundred pages of this! To read is to blink. You have to wonder: How much of what Shilts reports can really be true? Maybe Shilts has turned into a gay version of Leopold Bloom, Joyce's addled Jew, who stumbles around Dublin crowing to himself about the many distinguished persons who have been Jews. One of the gay rights pioneers tells Eric Marcus in *Making History* that the Mattachine Society back in the early '50s used to build up a mystique of power by boasting about unnamed "senators and generals" who were secret members. Maybe every uniformed gay whom Shilts wheedled into giving an interview took the opportunity to indulge in a bit of happy boasting along those reassuring Mattachine lines, and claim piled on claim, until Shilts's research had painted the military lavender.

Yet how do we know who is authentically homosexual? Who counts as a true-blue lesbian is a famously tricky question, much fought over within the lesbian movement, due to an unmistakable tendency among some young women to feel an attraction now to women, now to men, then to take a few tours through the lesbian bars only to end up, androgynous butterflies that they are, in the arms of some properly heterosexual male—which is a phenomenon that drives the harder-line lesbian militants to apoplexy. Shilts himself reports the statistical claims about lesbianism while carefully refraining from endorsing them.

The anecdotes meanwhile point to one more station in the gay soldier's typical progress through the military. That is the moment when, having made the sexual discovery, the unfortunate man or woman in uniform looks up and sees the steely blade of institutional repression inexorably descending. A tale of secret interrogations, spyings, coerced confessions, mail searches, telephone tappings and pressures on people to testify against one another suddenly reveals itself to the astonished soldier's eyes. Then come the formal charges of sodomy or committing indecent acts or fraternization with the wrong people or "conduct unbecoming an officer." Shilts cites a South Carolina lawyer who has dug up a German witch-hunters' guide from 1484, the *Malleus Maleficarum*, to show the medieval spirit of these inquisitions. And just as in the witch-hunting crazes of centuries ago, the zeal for persecuting gays seems to rise and fall according to a logic that is impossible to detect.

During the Vietnam War gay bars, clubs and social circles made up a "vast gay subculture" of the American military, especially in Saigon, where wildness among the friskier gays seems nearly to have rivaled wildness among the friskier straights. But that was war; peace is hell.



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A sample paragraph from Shilts's book records just a few of the persecutions that went on in tranquil 1980:

> Eighteen women came under investigation at the North Island Naval Air Station in San Diego in 1980. Another half dozen were charged in a lesbian purge at Fort McPherson and Fort Stewart in Georgia. Thirty gay airmen came under investigation at Malmstron Air Force Base near Great Falls, Montana, during the summer of 1980 and at least eight were discharged. At least two airmen had nervous breakdowns after OSI interrogations, according to a report in the *Gay Community News*. Still another investigation focused on the women's volleyball team at the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. This investigation followed a probe of the women's softball team at West Point.

And so it went until the ever-vigilant four services had discharged 1,966 people for homosexuality in a mere twelve months.

It is not often remarked how much damage the military has done to itself with these persecutions, mostly by eliminating people with rare or valuable skills. The dollar cost to the military, as estimated by Congress's General Accounting Office, has been $22.5 million a year, though as Shilts observes, the true figure has got to be a lot higher—hundreds of millions of dollars a year, he thinks—given that most of the people who come under suspicion tiptoe out of the service before getting formally accused. As for the cost measured in injuries to the soul—this, of course, is beyond reckoning.

It is infuriating to read about these things, and it has infuriated Shilts to report them. Sometimes his fury gets the better of him, and out come the comparisons to the Nazi murder of the Jews, which is a trope that pops up pretty often in gay rights literature. But the anecdotal method of his journalism has its own discipline, and after a few lines of spleen the discipline asserts itself, and the next anecdote moves into place. And as the pages turn and the number of these anecdotes creeps upward, you no longer need Randy Shilts or the gay rights movement to get mad on your behalf. Your own fist pounds the table, and the more you pound, the more you wonder why these military persecutions always seemed, until recently, like something less than a moral outrage. The abuses were never invisible; yet neither were they seen. Everything was public;

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nothing was noticed. How could that have been?

I think the explanation—part of it, anyway—has to do with the extreme peculiarities of a movement that went from minuscule to mass in very few years. Those early protests against military gay policy back in the '60s never had the remotest chance of bringing the military issue to public attention. The entire national organized homophile membership at the time that Rodwell picketed the Manhattan induction center was just 400 people, men and women both, according to Marcus. Without the Stonewall riot and the noisiness of New Leftism, the gay movement was nothing at all. But New Leftism made the movement anti-militarist, which meant that, when a few peeps of protest against the military prejudice did begin to be heard, it was not because of any careful agitations by the gay political groups.

Instead the first audible protests arose because, by 1974 or '75, even the most conservative and Republican of military officers, if they happened to be gay, were inhaling the post-Stonewall cultural atmosphere, and to inhale was to be transformed, and the transformed soldiers were coming up with lively responses of their own, one rugged individual at a time. With a sailor here and a sergeant there, by 1976 the political and legal challenges to the military policy were springing up on a weekly basis. Plainly the typical career of a homosexual in the armed forces had generated yet another phase, which was the moment when enough was enough and the accused person got over his mortification and began to shout, in the vivid language of June 28, 1969, "Nobody's gonna fuck with me!," which might as well be the national motto. The soldiers called their lawyers. And that was the crossover moment when the newly assertive military gays reached out to the antimilitary gay movement that had created the conditions for the new assertiveness.

The anomalies were not slow in appearing. At the annual Stonewall marches around the country in the mid-'70s, people were still chanting slogans that derived from the GLF and the high tide of the New Left. Lesbians chanted, "Dare to struggle, dare to win, dare to snuggle, dare to win," which may have carried no echo in their own minds but was nonetheless a cozy, ladylike adaptation of Chapter Seven, "Dare to Struggle," etc., from Mao's *Little Red Book* (which begins: "People of the world, unite and defeat the U.S. aggressors and all their running dogs!"). Gays chanted: "Ho ho homosexual, the status quo is ineffectual," which was a not-so-distant echo of anti-war chants in praise of the same Ho Chi Minh against whom the American military had fought with such little success. Yet in 1975 Sgt. Leonard Matlovich, the first and most celebrated of the gay soldiers to put up an attention-getting fight for his own career, turned up at one of these parades in New York and was welcomed as a hero of the movement—even if the other paraders must have scratched their left-wing heads over what to do with a U.S. Army sergeant. And this kind of anomaly, once it had cropped up in the gay demonstrations, proved to be a perennial.

You could see it at the March On Washington by several hundred thousand homosexuals in April 1993, the hugest such gathering in the history of the world, as was repeatedly said. The march adopted gay rights in the American military as the chief of its several demands—yet some of the 1993 nostalgics for 1969 still raced around in loincloths, and more than a few of the speakers and performers at the podium still displayed an instinctive disdain for anything connected to a uniform. The long-ago New Left could never make up its mind about the horrors of American oppression versus the glories of American pop rebellion; and it was clear that, a generation later, shadows of that same confusion hovered over the gay movement. Maybe gay oppression derived from the larger cruelties of the American system, which ought to be overthrown, or maybe the dream of gay liberation derived from the larger dream of American liberty, which ought to be expanded. Maybe the uniformed military gays waving from the podium were the agents of imperialism, or maybe they were the sword and shield of American-style individual freedom, and who could say?

The level of muddle was fairly impressive, and it was hard to see who was going to clear it up. The old-time movement ideologues were not about to overthrow the beliefs that had served them well enough over the years, and the shrewder movement leaders could scarcely be expected to irritate and divide their own march-going and dues-paying constituents by launching a debate over basic political beliefs. If anyone was going to work up some genuinely new thoughts and give those thoughts a sharp enough edge to command attention, it would have to be intellectuals of the sort who don't mind a little unpopularity. And if any such people existed, they would probably have to be a new generation entirely—just the way that, among black intellectuals, only an unpopular and sometimes conservative new wave of writers in the course of the 1980s was able to challenge the old Black Power orthodoxies from those same radical '60s.

Does that sort of development seem likely among the gay writers? Shilts himself may be a sign of such a possibility, due to his choice of journalistic topics and his snappish rejoinders to radical critics. You could point to a number of articles in the pages of this magazine as still another sign. And there have been other indications, less visible but more astonishing. At the Washington march in April I doubt that many knapsacks carried, stuffed among the bologna sandwiches and bottled water, a rolled-up copy of the previous month's issue of *Commentary*, which has never been the gay movement's friend and comfort. Yet here were hints about possible new directions in gay intellectual life where no one would have thought to look. Having published perhaps one too many fulminations against the evils of homosexuality over the years, the editors of *Commentary* found themselves, in their March issue, publishing no fewer than fourteen pages of letters responding to the discussion of homosexual themes, and while some of those letters stoutly defended the magazine's customary antipathy, several of the others struck a different note altogether.

The authors of those letters were not, by and large, avatars of the radical '60s. They were the readers of *Commentary* magazine. Yet in textbook illustration of the fact that homosexuality is not ideologically determined, some of those *Commentary* loyalists happened to be gay themselves, and chose to announce that fact, and saw no reason to keep their indignation hidden, either. Cultural developments travel a little slowly among the right-wing intellectuals, but they do travel, eventually. For here was the Stonewall uprising at last, fourteen pages of it, angry and inflamed, finally arrived at the door of the neoconservative flagship journal.

What do these new conservative gay writers think? The first and most passionate of *Commentary*'s letter-writing *enragés* was, to the surprise of at least some of his occasional readers, Bruce Bawer, who for many years served as the main literary critic at *Commentary*'s sister journal in the arts, *The New Criterion*. Bawer has just now expanded his letter into a book called *A Place at the Table: The Gay Individual in American Society* explaining his thoughts in detail, and at the core of that explanation is a portrait of the author himself. The portrait is not exactly a confirmation of every Jean Genet cliché about outlaw homosexuality that you keep stumbling on in the literature of gay studies. The pillar of Bruce Bawer's week is Sunday

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attendance at Episcopal services. He lives quietly and monogamously with his companion, Chris. Each molecule of his existence, except one, seems to be profoundly straight. Yet that one small departure from the conventional norm has brought down on his unoffending head any number of insults and injuries over the years.

His friends invited him to a wedding that he himself, playing Cupid, had helped bring about. But when he and Chris arrived for the ceremony, the bride and the groom went out of their way to look down their smug heterosexual noses at their own non-hetero guests. He labored for four thankless years as the film critic of the neanderthal *American Spectator*, but when he declined to strike even the briefest mention of homosexuality and AIDS from one of his reviews, he was forced out of his column, if only to maintain the integrity of the magazine's commitment to its own intolerance. And the sober way in which Bawer records these humiliations, the precision of his complaints, the care with which he avoids any note of self-pity, in sum, his rectitude and dignity in the face of an endless drizzle of minor and major insults and wounds, yields at last to a barrage of controlled anger. He is a man with a rifle and a motive. He asks: Is homosexuality immoral? Is it incompatible with ordinary decency? Is it un-Christian, un-Episcopal? Unintelligent? Is it a threat to children? And his book advances to the sound of a steady fire of no, no, no.

Here at last is a book-writing Foster Gunnison, at war with a single prejudice and with nothing else. He doesn't want an avalanche of social reform; he wants a social and cultural adjustment, namely the one that bears on himself. And as the centerpiece of that minor adjustment he calls for "the legal recognition of gay unions"—whether these unions go under the name of marriage or of domestic partnership. He wants gays everywhere to be able to enjoy the kind of household tranquility that he and Chris have managed to enjoy, and he wants respectable gay lovers to receive the same kind of respect as respectable heterosexuals. That is what he means by "a place at the table." The complaint that gay companionships cannot really be a "moral equivalent" of heterosexual marriage strikes him not only as offensive but farcical, given the many cheating husbands and wife-beaters and bickering couples that he says he knows. Love's content, not its form, is the important thing for him. For Bawer is, in the end, a true man of the modern gay movement, which is to say, a romantic, and honesty and love are his gods, even his God, if I read him correctly on the subject of Christ.

The argument is attractively made, and it comes burnished with the sheen of righteous rage, and I only wonder if the passionate insistence of his feeling about honesty and love still leaves him in the realm of opinion that can be counted as genuinely conservative. For what happens to a family where love is no longer quite as romantic as it used to be? A good many people who wish to preserve the conventional family at nearly any cost—the advocates, that is, of a conventionally conservative position—may think, not unreasonably, that personal honesty can pose a bit of a problem from time to time; and where honesty is a problem, hypocrisy is a solution. Those less than happy marriages that Bawer airily disdains may strike the advocates of "family values" as safer and more reassuring than no family at all.

He doesn't care for the radical gay writers. When he thinks of Allen Ginsberg and the ink-stained wretches of *The Village Voice*, his indignation gets its second wind and the rifle-fire of no, no, no resumes at once. He denounces the "false dichotomy propounded by the gay subculture: out, proud and promiscuous versus closeted, ashamed and repressed." He says: "Sexual orientation is one issue, sexual irresponsibility another." The notion of sexuality as a kind of utopia that keeps popping up among the radicals strikes him as a lunacy. Where others see a commendable gay radical freedom-forging, he sees a pitiable gay self-hatred. Yet I wonder if the radicals don't have a clearer understanding than the former critic from *The New Criterion* why it is that arguments for honesty and romantic love might seem threatening to a conservative version of family stability that has always had to rely in the last instance on the virtues of self-abnegation and duty toward others.

Whatever the rights and wrongs of Bawer's thousand contentions, his book makes an impressive point, it seems to me, merely by virtue of its lucidity and its provenance. For just when you might have thought that the gay movement had run out of ideas and was trapped forever in its own splendid colorfulness and its unresolvable ambivalences about the wider American culture, fourteen pages of letters in *Commentary* and *A Place at the Table* come wandering down a revisionist path where only a few lonely writers have gone before. The suggestion is strong that history has not yet said its last word about the gay movement, and there are newer people still to be heard from. Bawer himself is emphatic about this.

He thinks that, among the intellectuals, there are more gay conservatives than gay radicals, though the conservatives are only beginning to come out of hiding. He thinks the gay majority has not yet been heard from. And if any of that is true, the interesting possibility arises that, sooner or later, hipsterdom will have had its day, and the gay movement will move along to still another stage. For here come the squares. They are men and women both, and they are adjusting their ties and arranging their skirts, and they are clearing their throats, and if Bawer's book is any indication, they are slowly preparing to announce in a polite and well-modulated tone: "Pardon the intrusion, fellow citizens, but henceforth nobody's gonna fuck with us, either."

IV.

Single-issue reform campaigns and movements are so old in American life that Tocqueville was already struck by their importance and their democratic role in the 1830s, as recorded in his chapter on "The Usages that Americans Make of Association in Civil Life." But from Tocqueville's time until our own, the grandest of America's single-issue movements have tended to divide into two loosely defined categories, and the two categories have stumbled their way to different fates. And if only we knew which of these categories corresponded to the highly unusual movement that sprang into life during Greenwich Village's Night of the Barricades in 1969, we might be able to predict what the fate of gay liberation, too, will eventually turn out to be.

The first category of single-issue campaign, the kind of movement that seemed so exotic and un-European to Tocqueville, has always aimed at achieving that most arrogant of goals, a moral improvement in the hearts and the practices of other people. The most classic and characteristic of those moral movements, the temperance campaign, made Tocqueville laugh, until he reflected that under democracy, the aristocratic class that ought to set examples of superior behavior for the plebian mass of society has been driven into exile or has been hanged or has met some other democratic misfortune; and the remaining plebian population has no alternative but to organize mass movements on behalf of whatever change in behavior seems like a good idea. So he came to respect these campaigns.

It's a little odd to suggest a comparison between the old-fashioned straitlaced campaigns and something as extravagant and modern as gay rights. Yet here and there in the argument for gay rights a hint of moral exhortation in the old style does crop up, and why not? The slogan

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"gay is good," Frank Kameny's impossibly radical 1968 variation on "black is beautiful," contains, as if in computer code, any number of buried assertions: that sexuality in general is good; and that morality in sex is to be judged at least in part by its inner meaning for the individual and not by some external or religious rule; and that homosexuality is therefore not only a tolerable way to behave but is positively commendable, just as is heterosexuality. A program for moral improvement does lurk somewhere within those Freudian assertions. There is the invocation to be true to yourself, sexually and otherwise. There is the proposition that self-fulfillment is virtue—even if, in other circumstances, self-denial might also be virtue.

From the ancient Protestant perspective that underlay the old nineteenth-century movements for better behavior, the modern arguments in homosexuality's defense add up, no doubt, to a satanic program. But even in the nineteenth century, American Protestantism had its dissenting sects, and from sects to sex was never a distant leap. "Plural marriage" and other sexual experiments in sundry socialist communes were always an eye-catching element of the nineteenth-century reform tradition. Compared to the old Owenite communities and Fourierist phalansteries, not to mention the nineteenth-century Mormons, all of whom had in common the aim of rearranging domestic sexual relations in the name of a higher moral idea, what really is so bizarre about the gay movement of today?

Yet if the gay campaign rests on an argument for moral improvement, we might wonder if the movement of today will prove to be any stronger or longer lasting than those other, older campaigns. The Stonewall riot was followed by seven Biblical years of steady advance, and the gay movement had reason to savor the likelihood of a future full acceptance into society. By February 1977, no fewer than nineteen states had repealed their sodomy laws and forty cities had enacted civil rights ordinances mandating gay rights, and the Democratic party was strong, and all looked well.

But later that same year, as Shilts reminds us, Anita Bryant, the orange juice queen, invoking "the laws of God and the cultural values of man," organized a countermovement to a gay rights ordinance in Miami, which proved successful, and the Miami phenomenon went national. The countermovement against homosexuality took its prominent place within the Reagan coalition, and the advances from 1969 to 1976 went into an extended period of hand-to-hand combat with the right-wing counterrevolution both in the armed forces and everywhere else. The violence and the unpredictability of these debates were such that by the time Bill Clinton ascended to the White House, the advances and the retreats seemed to occur on an hourly basis, even in the calculations of the president himself. To see any kind of grand historical trend was not so easy.

For if the back-and-forth of argument over gay issues merely throws one movement for moral improvement up against another, nothing can guarantee that gay prospects won't keep on wavering forever, and every on-rushing wave for social tolerance will go spilling up against an equal wave for traditional values, and the question never will get settled. One day the fervor for gay reform might even subside, which is usually the fate of single-issue movements that are fundamentally moral in their appeal. Prohibition, for instance, silently withdrew to a handful of "dry" towns and counties, where even today people can quietly refrain in peace and suffer the derision of the lost-soul "wets" who comprise the rest of the population.

In a book called *The Corporate Closet: The Professional Lives of Gay Men in America*, James D. Woods and Jay H. Lucas report on intimate interviews that they have conducted with seventy gay men who hold mostly good jobs at mostly well-

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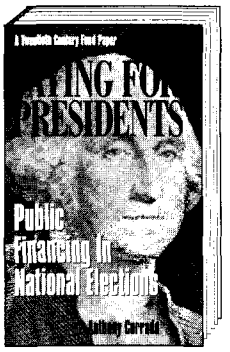

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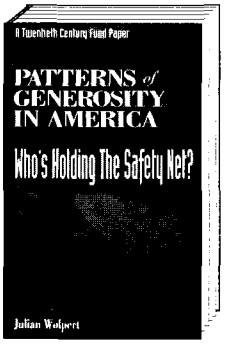

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known companies. These men (and a number of lesbians whom you can see, as it were, out of the corner of your eye) enjoy more rights and more respect than anyone would have dreamed of twenty-five years ago. A blessed handful of corporations have become genuinely decent, at least in intention, toward their gay employees. Yet the striking thing is how afraid so many of these men and women remain. They still hide behind an intricate filigree of deception and disguise. They are a target, but not a force. It's hard to see how anyone could ever drive the gay movement out of Greenwich Village or the Castro district; but in the offices where some of these people work, there wouldn't be much of a fight.

Still, in American history, and not just in America, there is a different kind of single-issue campaign—not a campaign for moral reform, but a movement for political and cultural enfranchisement. The enfranchisement of poor white working men during the presidency of Andrew Jackson in the 1830s, the battle for trade union rights and government protections for industrial workers that began in Jackson's time and has never ended, the abolitionist movement to free the slaves and later the civil rights movement to free the freedmen, the women's suffrage movement of earlier times and the modern feminist movement that arose a split-second before gay liberation: these were never movements for moral improvement or for better behavior, except maybe in a secondary way. They were movements to lead one sector of society after another outward from the gloom of bottom-place standing in the social hierarchy into the glorious mediocrity of the American middle. And with movements like these, a question of progress and its irreversibility arises, and at once plunges us into a deep question of philosophy.

The idea of progress in these waning days of the twentieth century has reached the point where mere mention of the word makes people break out in the same patronizing smile that crossed Tocqueville's lips upon discovering a naive American phrase like "temperance." The belief in history's forward motion turns out to be an oddly self-negating idea, such that anyone who subscribes to the idea with any fervor at all is halfway guaranteed to set mankind back a good thousand years, given the chance. And yet progress, especially in the experience of us fellow-citizens of Andrew Jackson and Martin Luther King Jr., has been known to take some less alarming forms, which are neither so heated and furious as to be utopian and dangerous nor so slow and cool as to be entirely undetectable.

In the introduction to his book about America, Tocqueville talked about a progress of that middling sort—the progress that he detected over the course of 600 years, which he thought was gliding forward at fifty-year intervals and was leading toward ever more equality, ever less hierarchy. The scale and the grandeur of the forward motion seemed to him, after so many centuries, a matter of "providence." And if there is any ground for talking about that kind of progress, if it still makes sense to speak of a gradual inclusion into society of ever more marginal and downtrodden sectors of poor unhappy mankind, if progress has not at last stumbled to an end under the hot rays of television culture and fundamentalist preachings, as some people think, and if forward motion is still somehow discernible in spite of the violent backward jolts that are perfectly capable of lasting for periods longer than Tocqueville's fifty-year intervals—if any of that is true, then the prospect for people whose desires are homosexual appears a little brighter.

Or at least the prospect of some version of gay liberation would look brighter if homosexuals could be shown to be somehow analogous to the other historically oppressed sectors of society that have benefited from irreversible emancipations. Do those analogies exist? The white workingmen, the blacks and the women who have benefited from past and present emancipatory campaigns have been around forever, and the Jews and other religious minorities in need of emancipation in the past have been around for what seems like nearly as long. But while homosexuality itself is doubtless eternal (and may even be genetically programmed, according to a much-contested theory), the antiquity of a group of people who can be called "homosexuals" is a vexed question, to which vast portions of the literature of modern gay studies have been devoted.

According to Michel Foucault, who counts as the literature's founding father, a word to describe homosexuals didn't even exist until 1870. Until then, you could talk about certain sexual pleasures or practices that people might partake in, and only later could you talk about a full-blown human type. In Foucault's formula, "The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species." The current wave of books on homosexuality includes one called *Out in the World* by a gay American writer named Neil Miller, who takes this sophisticated Foucaultian observation and more or less proves its validity with a quick tourist's hop around the world. Miller visits the gay social worlds of a dozen countries in Europe, Africa, the Mideast, East Asia, Australia and South America and produces some nice verbal snapshots of the people he meets. His book is modest and casual, full of the kind of sweeping generalizations that travel-writing requires but that might grate in the ear of anyone being generalized about.

"The prevailing sexual mode for Egyptian men seemed to be the polymorphous perverse," says Miller. Conceivably Egyptian readers might wish to comment. But these thumbnail descriptions and tourist summaries of Miller's do bring out several curious variations in sexual customs and attitudes around the world. Visiting the black townships of South Africa, he discovers that people there aren't sure if male homosexuals should count as male or female or as a third sex that might even be capable of bearing children. He discovers a homosexuality that is strictly regimented by a notion of "male" roles and "female" roles, so that everyone is either a "king" or a "queen," more or less like the old-fashioned American lesbian bars in *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold.*

In some countries not even the homosexuals consider themselves homosexual. In Thailand, Miller stumbles on a sexual atmosphere dominated by prostitution, straight and gay. In Latin America and elsewhere, he discovers a way of categorizing male homosexuality that considers the "passive" role homosexual but the "active" role not, which is a pretty common idea in Anglo-America, too. And from these observations Miller speculates that a modern-style homosexual identity—Foucault's "species"—crops up only at a certain moment in the development of society. This moment, he thinks, arrives when four minimum requirements have been fulfilled: a fair amount of personal freedom and tolerance; a degree of economic development that is strong enough to allow people to get away from home and move about freely; a relatively high status for women; and what he calls "a decline in the power of the family and religious institutions in defining and determining every aspect of an individual's life."

Reading Miller, you'd have to conclude that before these four rigorous conditions have been met, many people might experience homosexual urges and might even act on them in a regular way, though probably with a lot of angst and inconvenience, exactly as in the different stops on his worldwide tour. But once the conditions have been met, those same angst-ridden persons would probably notice that life can hold out better possibilities for themselves, and an ever-growing number would leap at the chance to live as

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homosexuals in the modern style of the West, perhaps still maintaining a false front in public but no longer pretending to themselves. In the United States, Miller's four requirements were met during the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and after that, a feeling about being distinctly gay cropped up at an ever-increasing rate, even if the straight world never quite figured out what was happening.

But once this new gay feeling had been fanned into street demonstrations by the radical breezes of the late '60s, the campaign for gay liberation did, it seems to me, take the form of a movement for enfranchisement. For the people who had now come "out" could never exactly go back "in." Human dignity doesn't bob up and down like grain prices. Naturally the gay movement is unlike any of the movements for enfranchisement that have come before, but then, each of the movements for enfranchisement has been unlike the ones that came before. Everything that has happened in American history would lead us to suppose that, if the gay movement does in fact count as such a movement and not just as a moral campaign, sooner or later it will have its day. Some kind of inevitable force does come into play, and the ever larger wing of the gay movement that has gone from bohemian antimilitarism to wanting a place within the armed forces and the rest of mainstream society has made a logical decision, and American liberty will increasingly mean not just the freedom to live the life of Christopher Street but also the life of Main Street, and be gay even so.

ILLUSTRATION BY TOM PRESTON FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

It is tempting to propose a still more grandiose claim. Neil Miller makes the point, though he feels slightly uncomfortable about it. The variations of homosexuality that he discovers around the world testify to the splendid multiformity of man; yet in each of the stations of his journey, he also stumbles on a few portentous signs of the single newer idea about homosexuality whose origin is the United States as well as Western Europe (where in Holland, Denmark and Norway, gay rights, having been inspired by the post-Stonewall movement, have prospered beyond anything achieved so far in the United States). "It was significant," he tells us, "that in many of the countries I visited, the leaders in creating a gay movement"—here he mentions the names of gay leaders from Cairo, Hong Kong and Bangkok—"had all spent time in the West." Random copies of the American gay magazine *The Advocate* turn up in Cape Town. A lesbian leader in Japan, where there are not many lesbian leaders, tells him: "You know, they say that whatever happens in the United States happens ten years later in Japan."

Plainly the spread of AIDS has prompted people in one country and another to put together some of these embryonic gay political organizations. But cultural factors seem to be the main impetus behind the new gay organizations, and chief among these factors, say what you will, is the worldwide spread of American pop culture and of the American-influenced culture of Western Europe. Miller, being a reasonable man, is of two minds about the ubiquitous creep of American images and ideas. Yet he notices that even the lowly and much reviled Western porno videos spread the kind of message that ought to be called "socially redeeming." From watching Western pornography some people in other parts of the world have learned the strictly modern news that the same person can have sex in both the "active" and "passive" positions, that "kings" can be "queens" and vice versa, and this constitutes a turn against social hierarchy in a realm that Tocqueville never got around to mentioning. And since the Americanization of culture around the world appears to be something that no one has yet figured out how to stop, at least not for long or in a total degree, some of the new thinking about homosexuality that already figures in popular American culture does seem bound to spread, regardless of the outrage and the scimitar-brandishing it might inspire.

Given the degree of wealth and secularization that produces Miller's list of four preconditions for a modern gay identity, what can possibly prevent the new thinking from producing some actual gay movements in countries around the world? And given some further progress toward secularism and democracy, what will prevent these movements from one day bursting into the open, to the amazement of everyone, with genuinely modern demands for the right to dignity and a private life?

A grand spectacle does seem to be taking place before our eyes, and this spectacle, when you get it into focus, has every appearance of being "history from below"—not the history that is written on the page, but the history that is written on the street. When the sounds from the noisy spectacle on the street reach our ears, they seem to be saying: "Ordinary individuals and lowly despised corners of society do make their own history—at least they *can*, and someday they will, and history shows their capacity to do so, and in fact some of us ordinary and despised people are doing it right now." We seem to be hearing: "There are no marshals today—not on the question of heterosexuality versus homosexuality. On that most crucial and personal of questions, you, each and every one of you, are responsible for yourselves." We are hearing: "Concerning homosexuality, it is forbidden anymore to forbid."

In earlier times, in the era that was only yesterday, many a solid citizen would have laughed at cries like that. Rights for the small minority of persons whose impulses in love and sex are not absolutely typical: what hilarity! A giant smirk crosses nine-tenths of the globe even now. There is reason to think that the battles over gay liberation will go on wavering, now forward, now back, very likely with violent shocks and setbacks for generations at a time. But there is reason also to think that, along with the other consequences and quarrels of modernity, these battles will spread and not grow narrower, and the final vector will point toward more liberation, not less. There is reason to think that on the matter of homosexuality, some small but important aspect of human personality has begun to change, not just in two or three cities, nor in two or three countries, but, weird though it is to suggest such a possibility, *everywhere.* •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Journeys to the Interior

Besides her extraordinary talent, Debra Winger has extraordinary courage. She is making her career (as far as an observer can tell) exactly as she chooses, if we allow for the limitations of the American film world. She takes roles that appeal to her whether or not they are conventionally shrewd career moves. Sometimes the results are incomprehensible: What was she after in the women she played in *Leap of Faith* and *Wilder Napalm*? Well, perhaps they were part of the dues one pays for independence, the kinds of mistakes that wouldn't occur in a plushly managed star career. But such a career would not have included the neurotic hooker in *Everybody Wins* or the American woman gone primitive Arab in *The Sheltering Sky* and would certainly not have included the mentally enfeebled woman she plays in **A Dangerous Woman** (Gramercy).

This woman is competent at a simple job in a shop, can live by herself and take care of herself; but she is a grade or two below normality. Winger has obviously done the obvious thing: she has watched such women and stored up information. She has then been careful not to present that information as such; she has conceived a human being who lives within certain limitations and has brought her to life as a person—with impediments.

Nothing is easier to play than a loony. Actors love it. But Winger is not "a" anything. She is this woman—bespectacled, who moves with a slightly waddling, splay-footed walk, whose gestures are sometimes incomplete and have to be repeated, whose face is a window revealing puzzles and canted feelings. The entire film depends on the conviction of Winger's performance, and she doesn't let it down.

But it lets *her* down. The screenplay by Naomi Foner, from Mary McGarry Morris's novel, begins with a muddle. It takes about twenty minutes or so to make clear who is who. Strung out, carpentered, predictable, the story is basically the old wayfaring stud idea, the wanderer out of Tennessee Williams and William Inge who passes through, or intends to, after messing up some lives, particularly women's. Here it's Gabriel Byrne, who imposes himself, as a maintenance man, on Winger's aunt, Barbara Hershey, owner of a large Californian fruit farm. Byrne seduces Winger when he's drunk and couples with Hershey when she's drunk.

He is meant to wander on after all this, but he is delayed because of Winger's entanglement in another plot involving murder and because Winger has become pregnant. Out of this complicated mess, the film struggles to find an upbeat ending, in flat contradiction of likelihood.

What I hope very hard is that *A Dangerous Woman* doesn't become another lost cause like *Brotherly Love* with Peter O'Toole or *Staircase* with Richard Burton or *Rich in Love* with Albert Finney—or *Everybody Wins* with Debra Winger. Each of these has an excellent performance that few saw because the film was of small consequence.

Much is said—justly—about the difficulties of having an artistically sensible career in American films, even for those who are successful. Winger is not the only contemporary actor to challenge the obstacles, but she certainly is outstanding. I hope that her work here gets at least some of the attention that will be lavished on lesser performances in flashier pictures.

The very opening of **The Trial** (Angelika) is discouraging. The color is too pretty—*any* color would be too pretty. Kafka's novel is, for me, in marvelously graded black and white. But it's worse: we can see Joseph K.

There's nothing particularly wrong with Kyle MacLachlan, who plays the role. Unlike Anthony Perkins in Orson Welles's film of the novel (1963), he is not a joke. The trouble is that MacLachlan is *there*. In the novel he is what we make him. He is never described: he never has a specific nose or height or hair color. We are to inhabit him, something like the "I" in Proust. To see him given corporeality, specificity, disturbs the atmosphere of the novel.

Harold Pinter, who made the screen adaptation (and did an immensely superior adaptation of Proust), says of the novel, "The nightmare takes place in the day. It's certainly not abstract or fantastic." This is true up to a point: abstract sets and costumes and lighting would be ruinous, would militate against the dialectic of the work. The places are real, but the actions within them are

FILMS WORTH SEEING

The Remains of the Day. *The screenplay bruises the subtlety of the novel, but Anthony Hopkins is marvelous as the butler, the mainstay of the manse, and Emma Thompson's housekeeper certainly helps. (Reviewed 12/6/93)* **Schindler's List.** *Steven Spielberg, of all people, re-creates the Kraków ghetto of 1943 with imaginative skill and affecting commitment. Liam Neeson storms through as Schindler, the German entrepreneur-savior; Ben Kingsley survives wonderfully as his Jewish accountant. (12/13/93)* **A Streetcar Named Desire.** *With some previously censored footage. Brando's performance is titanic, but William's masterwork, even with the restorations, is still compromised. (11/29/93)* **The War Room.** *A documentary. For those who want to know what went on in the planning of Clinton's presidential campaign. "Starring" James Carville and George Stephanopoulos. (11/22/93)* **—SK**

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abstract—derived from the fears and anxieties and guilts that have been buried in Joseph K. It's those buried matters that the various officials haul forward into the front of his mind, which is what makes him accept their otherwise incredible behavior.

The general line of the screenplay is faithful to the book, although the two sexual episodes, implicit in Kafka, are explicit here. The trouble is that in order to keep the film coursing along, a great deal of discussion and comment must be deleted. This is true in the Titorelli scene and most hurtfully true in the cathedral. After the priest tells Joseph K. the parable of the person who waited his whole life at the doorway to the Law, Kafka continues with nine pages of discussion between the two men, all of which is omitted here. This is cinematically necessary, I suppose, but it helps to make this version of the novel the equivalent of Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare.*

David Jones, a sensitive director who has worked with Pinter before in theater and film (*Betrayal*, for example), employs a good British cast, excluding MacLachlan and Jason Robards as the lawyer but including Anthony Hopkins as the priest. Some of the transitions between sequences are jerky, and the story lacks growth to its finish. But then it always lacked that growth. Max Brod, Kafka's friend and executor, said that the author "regarded the novel as unfinished. Before the final chapter ... various further stages of the mysterious trial should have been described." Brod also says that "anyone who was not informed that the author had proposed to do further work on it ... would scarcely note its deficiencies." This, I would say, is untrue, masterpiece of this century's morale though the novel is. The reification of persons and places before our eyes only makes Brod's comment even less true. •

Finest Hour Syndrome

By Ian Buruma

The Downing Street Years by Margaret Thatcher

(HarperCollins, 914 pp., $30)

The Anatomy of Thatcherism by Shirley Robin Letwin

(Transaction, 377 pp., $32.95)

Since the end of World War II, Great Britain and the Federal Republic of Germany have been driven by opposite obsessions. West Germans, particularly but not only of the left, have been haunted by the fear that the experience of the 1930s and early 1940s might be repeated. Every scrap of evidence that the Federal Republic still bore traces of those times was pounced upon, as though it was a cancer cell to be destroyed at once. The British, especially but not only of the right, have been subject to a deep nostalgia for those very same years: Britain's finest hour, standing alone, with some American help, on the breach of freedom. Traces of that finest hour are cherished like regimental silver. And nothing raises morale so much as promises of a repeat performance.

Margaret Thatcher understood this perfectly. Indeed, she tried to personify, even to personalize, this British nostalgia. She believed in the national myths, and she used them to her full advantage. The first thing she did, as she moved into 10 Downing Street, was to hang a portrait of Winston Churchill outside the Cabinet Room, and some Henry Moore drawings of the Blitz in the hall.

Her identification with Churchill, as a war leader more than as a politician, was particularly strong in 1982, during that splendidly nostalgic adventure in the Falklands. A War Cabinet was formed, and Thatcher, in her own words, "never lived so intensely" as she did in those weeks. A favorite spot for war meetings was Chequers, the prime minister's country house. "I am glad," she writes, "that Chequers played a large part in the Falklands story. Churchill had used it quite a lot during the Second World War and its atmosphere helped to get us all together."

Even in times of peace, however, the Churchillian legend was never far from her thoughts. It is incorporated into the Thatcher story, like an ancient myth embedded in a contemporary tale. It may be found in the very structure of her book. It goes something like this. Like Churchill, Thatcher comes to power at a time of severe crisis. The United States is paralyzed by the "Vietnam Syndrome," and thus, in the war against communism, hors de combat for the moment. Britain is in a desperate state. Its economy has been wrecked by Tory appeasers, who failed to stop "the debilitating effects of socialism." And the Soviet threat is stronger than ever. Thatcher does not actually say, as Churchill did, that she had never slept so well as on the first night of her prime ministership, but she does quote William Pitt's remark: "I know that I can save this country and that no one else can." From there on, her book builds up to a series of finest hours and great battles won, only to end in a personal defeat, which she puts down to the low treachery of ungrateful men. Churchill also lost his job after he won the war. He, too, felt bitter about it.

It is easy to ridicule Thatcher's Churchillian pretensions, to see them as just more examples of Britain's debilitating Finest Hour Syndrome. Though her admirers like to think that she managed to halt Britain's decline, it is equally plausible to see her as a symptom of it. Still, to be fair to the Iron Lady, she did share certain characteristics with the old bulldog, for which she must be admired. A sense of humor, alas, was not one of them; but she did have a flair for drama, which is much more apparent in the superb four-part BBC series on Thatcher (also called *The Downing Street Years*) than in this dreary book, whose bland prose only comes alive in fits of personal nastiness. And though she was undoubtedly Philistine, pig-headed and ruthless, she did not lack in courage. She had convictions and she stuck to them.

Not all her convictions were wrong. There is, for example, a remarkable scene in *November Days*, Marcel Ophuls's documentary about the fall of the Berlin Wall. It is a clip from the BBC evening news of that great night in November, 1989. Asked for her reaction to the events, Thatcher looks happy and declares that the desire for freedom is unstoppable. Then Neil Kinnock, leader of the Labour opposition, gives his view. In an anxious tone of voice, he suggests that Herr Krenz, the Communist leader, should meet with other heads of government, secretly if necessary, to decide what is to be done. In his interview with

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Egon Krenz many months after the event, Orphuls asked him who was right. Well, said Krenz, the British prime minister, of course.

And so she was. Narrow-minded, xenophobic and shrill she may have been, but she did stand up for political and economic liberties, where others fudged, trimmed and compromised. This was recognized by many people in Eastern Europe, and not just because of her anti-Communist rhetoric, to which they were naturally (and rightly) receptive. Thatcher gives a moving description of her visit to Poland in 1988, when she went to Gdansk to meet Lech Walesa and the Solidarity leaders. She was the first Western leader to do so. Of course, she was taken to a church. Her account of this experience is one of the few genuinely moving scenes in the book:

> To my delighted astonishment, when Mr. Walesa and I entered I found the whole church packed with Polish families who rose and sang the Solidarity anthem "God give us back our free Poland." I could not keep the tears from my eyes. I seemed to have shaken hundreds of hands as I walked around the church. I gave a short, emotional speech and Lech Walesa spoke too. As I left there were people in the streets crying with emotion and shouting "thank you, thank you" over and over again. I returned to Warsaw with greater determination than ever to do battle with the Communist authorities.

If only she had shown such determination in the case of people more directly under her jurisdiction, such as the Hong Kong Chinese—but more about that later. The other thing that Thatcher had in common with Churchill was a liking, uncommon in Tory circles, for Jews. Her governments contained more Jewish cabinet ministers than any after the war—or before the war, come to think of it. Her north London constituency had a large middle-class Jewish population that, by and large, supported her. There are several explanations for Thatcher's philosemitism. Like Churchill, indeed like Disraeli, Thatcher was an outsider in the Tory establishment: Churchill, because he was too raffish and idiosyncratic to be a trusted clubman, Disraeli because he was flashy and Jewish, and Thatcher because she was common, shrill and a woman. So it may simply be that both Thatcher and Churchill were attracted to intelligent outsiders. It is interesting that both were also far more pro-American than Tory gentlemen tend to be. Churchill and Thatcher admired the get-up-and-go of the immigrant ethos.

But there is more to it than that. Disraeli liked to bamboozle the English gentry with fantasies about the Jews as an ancient aristocracy, a kind of biblical super race. Thatcher is unlikely to share such a belief, but she does have an image of Jews as a close-knit community, blessed with her favorite virtues: family-minded, hard-working, good with money. She writes that in "the thirty-three years I represented [Finchley] I never had a Jew come in poverty and desperation to one of my constituency surgeries." So the ideal Thatcherite, in her own mind, was less the bluff and tweedy Tory squire (a type that she rather detested) than the thrifty fur dealer from north Finchley.

And yet her vision of Britain was not that of a multicultural immigrant society. She was a romantic nationalist who believed in "national character," in the destiny of nations, and so on. The problem was that her idea of national characters, so far as Europe was concerned, was firmly stuck in 1940. This was unfortunate, for it introduced an irrational element into the politics of a woman who boasted of her capacity for clear thinking and "British" common sense. The book is filled with expressions of contempt for foreigners, especially foreigners on the European Continent, and most particularly foreigners in the European Community. And sometimes, no doubt, her contempt was justified. Her diatribes against the Brussels *nomenklatura* were refreshing and useful. On the whole, however, her disdain is based on narrow prejudice and *folie de grandeur.*

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Thatcher sees the Europeans as cowards. "Weak! weak! weak!" is how she put it on television. Her European colleagues were "weak," for example, when they declined to bow to President Reagan's wish for them to cooperate in his bombing raid on Tripoli in 1985. Not only were they weak, they were devious and unfair, too. Reflecting on "the quintessentially un-English outlook displayed by the Community," when Thatcher wanted to secure a better financial arrangement for Britain, she quotes a few lines from Kipling:

> The Saxon is not like us Normans. His manners are not so polite.
> But he never means anything serious till he talks about justice and right.
> When he stands like an ox in the furrow with his sullen set eyes on your own,
> And grumbles, "This isn't fair dealing," My Son, leave the Saxon alone.

Thatcher's Britain, then, is the Saxon, standing up with her brethren across the Atlantic for what is just and right. The Anglo-Saxon nations, in her worldview, represent democracy and freedom, while the silky Normans and the belligerent Teutons stand for the opposite. This may be an accurate caricature of particular periods in history—1940, say—but to

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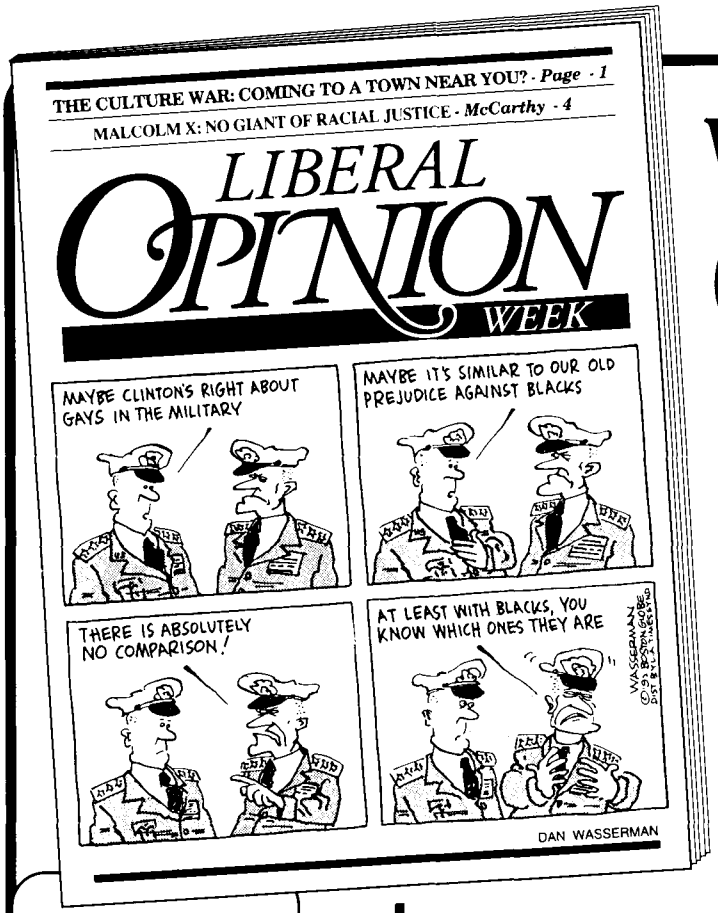
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believe that these are matters of national character is to provide a poor basis for negotiating Britain's interests in Europe. And Europe, fortunately or not, is where Britain's interests lie today, more than in the increasingly illusory special relationship with the United States, based, in her words, on "the ties of blood, language, culture and values." It is remarkable, incidentally, how many people talk about culture who have not the slightest interest in it.

Shirley Robin Letwin, in her spirited celebration of the Thatcher phenomenon, titled *The Anatomy of Thatcherism*, argues that Thatcher's politics were a revival of "a distinctive but unidentified British morality." Letwin believes—or believed; she died after her book appeared—that this British morality (national character?) was developed over centuries, and although it was almost buried under "a foreign morality" imported from the Continent during the nineteenth century, it continued to play on "like a faint melody."

Under this romantic guff lies an idea, or a caricature of an idea. It is this: Continental Europeans, by which Letwin means the French and the Germans, were unable to develop democratic institutions because they were rationalists in the grip of "classical morality." Classical morality, unlike British morality, separates reason and passion, lays claim to universal truths, laws and patterns, and seeks to impose order and unity rather than individuality and diversity. British morality, by contrast, allows for eccentricity and irrationality, because it manages to combine order and individual freedom. English society is not ordered by some autocratic version of Platonism, but by the rule of law and political representation. Foreigners are collectivists, the English are individualists. Foreigners are bossed around by bureaucrats, the English are stubborn about making their own choices. Ergo, Thatcher's economic ideas—monetarism, free trade, privatization—are an expression of British morality. Milton Friedman and Friedrich von Hayek are British moralists; the Jewish immigrant shakes hands with the English yeoman.

It is not clear where this leaves the Dutch Republic of the seventeenth century, or Florence of the fifteenth century. And what about Montesquieu's ideas on the spirit of the law, which influenced Burke, who has remained a Tory icon to this day? The truth is that collectivist ideas have battled it out with liberal ideas for much more than 2,000 years, and continue to do so, in Britain as much as anywhere else. Britain developed stable political institutions based on the rule of law before most other European nation-states; but this has little to do with traditional morality. It was the result of political ideas, economic interests and coincidence. Using such concepts as traditional British morality to describe political developments ends up in woolliness and confusion, but again it is a confusion that smacks of 1940, when Britain, for obvious reasons, was seen by many persecuted people as an island of freedom. This evoked romanticism of the kind expressed by the German-born art historian Niklaus Pevsner, who discovered, in *The Englishness of English Architecture*, British morality in British buildings.

Letwin's idea, which is shared, I think, by Thatcher, is an odd one. If the essentially British combination of order and freedom cannot grow everywhere, but only in the soil of Britain, or "Anglo-Saxon" nations, since it is cultural and historical, and since only foreigners believe in universals, why then should Thatcher bother to present herself as the queen of world liberation? She is proud of the fact that Thatcherism (whatever it may be) was taken up as a battle cry behind the Iron Curtain. In any case, isn't the whole point of Hayekian theory that it can work anywhere? If liberal democracy is to be preferred over dictatorship, on the ground that it is a cultural value, then dictators are quite right to dismiss it as a form of cultural imperialism.

The fascinating contradiction in Thatcher's politics is that she would agree with this, while clinging to a form of romantic nationalism that contradicts it. She believes that democracy can only work inside a nation-state. Why? Because "few people are prepared to make genuine sacrifices" for anything that supercedes it. Yet people have made genuine sacrifices for just that: Canadians, Americans and Australians shed blood in Europe twice in this century. Americans, Turks, British, Dutch and many others sacrificed their lives in Korea. Before that, Hungarians, Czechs and Austrians fought for the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which, by the way, was more liberal, and certainly more stable, than its component nation-states after it fell apart. Thatcher's conviction that cultural and linguistic diversity makes a democratic federation of European states impossible is not convincing. The United Kingdom and Northern Ireland—whose union, she declares, every Tory should defend—is certainly not based on cultural unity; it is a state consisting of four distinct nations.

Johan Huizinga put it well: nations are very old, nationalities are not. Nationality is a political concept, not a cultural concept. States are political arrangements that can, but need not, overlap with nations. Thatcher thinks that they do. She believes that government by consent cannot work if culture, language and history are not shared. Perhaps this helps to explain the greatest stain on her record as a promoter of freedom: the handing over of millions of British subjects in Hong Kong to a dictatorship in China.

This extraordinary act is smuggled into her book in a passage of typical Thatcherian hubris:

> What I wanted now was an agreed position on SDI to which both the president and I could lend our support, even though our long-term view of its potential was different. I had been thinking about this over the last few days and particularly on the long flight from Peking where I had been for the signing of the Joint Declaration on Hong Kong. I then jotted down, while talking to the national security adviser Bud McFarlane, the four points which seemed to me to be crucial...

Think about it: here is a leader of a middle-ranking European power, who has just signed over millions of British subjects to a Communist regime, babbling on about how she will instruct the American president to make the world safe for democracy. It is often recalled how the British Empire was kept together by a handful of British officers and the illusion of power, but Thatcher in full flight took this illusion to ludicrous lengths.

The Hong Kong story, or rather the lack of it (eight pages out of 914, when the Falklands gets sixty-two), is bizarre, especially since Thatcher's book can be read as one of the last full-blown trumpet blasts against communism. So obsessed is she with her record as a cold war crusader that she believes that her "reputation as a strong anti-Communist political leader" was "further burnished internationally by the Falklands War..." You would think that General Galtieri's champion had been Leonid Brezhnev instead of Jeane Kirkpatrick. As well as being a staunch anti-Communist, Thatcher was a great believer in the self-determination of peoples. She praised the Afghans for their struggle. She pleaded for the independence of the Baltic states (without much regard for the rights of Russian minorities). And the status of the Falkland Islands, she writes, must be "subject always to the requirement that the islanders themselves should have the final word."

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So far, so good. Why on earth, then, did she bargain away the future of Hong Kong over the heads of its people? Partly, of course, because fighting China was not quite the same proposition as fighting Argentina. Sending gunboats up the Pearl River delta was not really an option. Still, even Thatcher herself admits that she washed her hands of Hong Kong rather quickly. She had hoped to have had at least a referendum, or some kind of democratic consultation, but "nobody else seemed much attracted by my ideas; and in the end I had reluctantly to concede that since the Chinese would not accept such an approach it was not then worth studying further." Such is the sound of a lion's whimper.

But was there perhaps another reason for this uncharacteristic pusillanimity? Look again at her views on the Falklands:

> Since 1833 there has been a continuous and peaceful British presence on the islands. Britain's legal claim in the present day rests on that fact, on the desire of the settled population—which is entirely of British stock—to remain British. The principle of "self-determination" has become a fundamental component of international law, and is enshrined in the U.N. Charter.

So it is; but ethnic stock is not a legal concept. It is very much a part, however, of Chinese propaganda. The way Beijing sees it, the population of Hong Kong is largely Chinese, ethnically, linguistically and culturally, and so Hong Kong should be part of the Chinese state. Since this is also the way in which Thatcher views the world, she did not have much of a leg to stand on.

Thatcher's obsession with the nation-state, and her illusion of absolute national sovereignty, is actually rather un-English. In fact, it is precisely the kind of foreign importation that Shirley Letwin wrote about. The exultation of the nation-state is rooted in Continental European romanticism. Nor was Thatcher's political style very English. It had more in common with Bismarck or de Gaulle than with Churchill. If there is a traditional style of British Tory politics, it is one which Thatcher cannot abide, a "wet" and compromising style, paternalistic, secretive, gentlemanly, unintrusive, government with a silver spoon in its mouth, a kind of aristocratic liberalism. Though by no means an aristocrat, and not even a gentleman (if private education and Oxbridge are its prerequisites), John Major has the style down to a tee.

When Thatcher came to power, the

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Tory Establishment was represented by such languid, liberal-minded gentlemen as Ian Gilmour and Lord Carrington. She got rid of Gilmour quickly and was not sorry to see Carrington go. But she liked Carrington's successor as foreign secretary even less. He was Francis Pym, another soft-spoken Old Etonian, whom Thatcher regarded as weak, weak, weak. He was soon pushed out, too. The only other man subject to as much vitriol as Pym in Thatcher's book is Geoffrey Howe, who was also weak, weak, weak, especially on "Europe." No, Thatcher's favorite type of politician, the kind she "could do business with," is Norman Tebbit, a former airline pilot, sometimes known as "the Rottweiler."

Tebbit was a sharp operator perfectly in tune with the prejudices of the lower-middle class of England: the suburban patriots who fought their way out of the slums. Tebbit could be relied upon to speak out against immigration, to tell the unemployed "to get on their bikes" and foreigners where to stick it. His ideal Tory was not so much the fur trader from Finchley, let alone the wet toff, as the used car dealer who bought himself and the wife a mock Tudor semidetached in Essex, well away from Pakis and other nig-nogs. Like the grocer's daughter Thatcher, Tebbit felt no need to be sentimental about the working classes, or indeed about anything, except perhaps a certain beery idea of England.

The degree of class warfare inside the Tory party is not always apparent outside Britain, where people might be taken in by Thatcher's rounded vowels and assume she is rather grand. In *Barbarian Sentiments*, William Pfaff, while acknowledging Thatcher's humble origins, argues that her governments perpetuated the rule of an upper-class elite. This elite, he writes, has values that are "essentially agricultural, anti-industrial, anti-capitalist; the social ideal of the land-owning gentleman." This underrates Thatcher's attack on precisely those values, and often on the people who represented them.

She herself has interesting things to say on class:

> My background and experiences were not those of a traditional conservative prime minister. I was less able to depend on automatic deference, but I was also perhaps less intimidated by the risks of change. My senior colleagues, growing to political maturity in the slump of the 1930s, had a more resigned and pessimistic view of political possibilities. They were perhaps too ready to accept the Labour Party and the union leaders as authentic interpreters of the wishes of the people. I did not feel I needed an interpreter to address people who speak the same language.

Pfaff's elite, then, was for the appeasement of socialism, in Thatcher's view. I don't think this is quite what Pfaff meant. If Thatcher didn't care for patricians, the feeling was often mutual: "During 1980 the public was treated to a series of speeches and lectures by Ian Gilmour and Norman St. John Stevas on the shortcomings of monetarism, which, according to them, was deeply un-Tory, a kind of alien dogma..." Churchill, of course, would have been on their side, but then, in spite of being a distrusted maverick, he was a born toff, who wanted the little people to be happy. Happiness is not a much used word in Thatcher's book. Her mind was set on harder things. Words like "stiff," "steel," "backbone" and "resolve" litter her text. These are not what one is used to seeing in the soggy fields of Britain—except, of course, in times of war.

But Thatcher's "un-Tory" love of stiffness had its uses, especially in facing down challenges from such tough customers as Arthur Scargill, the militant leader of the National Union of Miners. Her populist radicalism was in some respects a much needed tonic in an increasingly supine country. She did shake up the class system—more money to the upwardly mobile, less deference to the squires. If this created an atmosphere that was less than genteel, at least it rolled back the lazy complacency to which Britain had become increasingly prone. Britain after Thatcher is a harder working, more competitive, more (for better and worse) American place. Private wealth increased, public services declined, and the 5 percent to 10 percent at the bottom of the social heap live in utter squalor.

Ruggedness, as a political principle, has its limits. Without patronage of some sort, private or public, civilizing institutions such as well-stocked public libraries, good state schools, quality broadcasting and well-maintained museums deteriorate. In Britain they have deteriorated alarmingly. This has enraged the liberal intelligentsia, which would not matter much in itself, except that some problems cannot be solved just by applying market principles. Britain has produced some of the most cultivated people in the world, but also a proletariat that is the most demoralized, the least educated and the least civilized in Western Europe. You see them in the football stadiums, in the ghastly public housing estates, in the filthy streets of Britain's bleak cities. And their number is growing. This is not just morally unacceptable; it is also politically dangerous. For in a time of crisis, they would be quite happy to tear the whole house down. In the meantime, they add to the crime statistics.

Yet it was on foreign policy, not on domestic policy, that Thatcher's own political fortunes crumbled. Not that her policies were all bad. She championed free trade on a continent that continues to be tempted by protectionism. She was the first to recognize that Gorbachev's reforms were real. And she understood that giving in to dictators makes the world a more dangerous place. The Falklands scrap hardly did justice to her talents as a war leader. Still, her Finest Hour nostalgia also tripped her up.

Thatcher instinctively behaved, for example, as though Germany was still ruled by the Kaiser, or even by Hitler. Toward the end of her book she proposes that Germany must be kept in check by a new entente cordiale between Britain and France. This is absurd. Western Europe has become too integrated to think of playing such balance-of-power games. The last thing that Britain or France (or anybody else in Europe) should want is to make Germany feel isolated. But instead of promoting stronger democratic institutions in the European Community, Thatcher encouraged xenophobia at home and antagonism abroad.

In the end her two most senior ministers, Nigel Lawson and Geoffrey Howe, felt that her attitudes were harming Britain's interests, and they resigned. It was a blow from which Thatcher failed to recover. After eleven years in office, her party decided to elect another leader, even as she was celebrating the fall of communism at Versailles, of all places. Her deep personal bitterness makes the last chapter the liveliest in her book. In her television interview, she was livelier still: "The worst thing of all was the treachery, while I had been away at an international conference signing treaties on behalf of my country at the end of the Cold War. It was treachery with a smile on its face. That was the worst of all." These were no longer the words of a democratic politician, but more like those of a Shakespearean monarch, about to be executed in the isolation of her own castle.

IAN BURUMA's new book, *The Wages of Guilt*, will be published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux in May.

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The Unhappy Inventor

BY DANIEL J. KEVLES

Alfred Nobel
by Kenne Fant
translated by Marianne Ruuth

(Arcade, 329 pp., $24.95)

Alfred Nobel's life was as remarkable as his legacy, the endowment of the five prizes—for achievement in physics, chemistry, physiology or medicine, literature and peace—that are annually awarded on December 10, the anniversary of his death, in 1896. He made his fortune by inventing dynamite and creating companies on two continents to manufacture and market it. He was fluent in Swedish, English, French, Italian, German and Russian. He had literary flair, read widely and was a welcome guest at Paris salons and the dinner table of Victor Hugo. Yet he had a limited capacity for friendship—he never married—partly because he tended to suspect that most people are gold diggers. He once wrote to his older brother Robert that one has "many friends only in dogs you feed with meat from others, and in worms who feed on you," adding, "Grateful stomachs and grateful hearts are twins." He was neurotic—a fear of being buried alive plagued him throughout his life—insecure, possessed by inner demons. They kept him at the inventor's bench long after his fortune was won and made him a persistently depressed and lonely man.

The first biographical measure of Nobel, *The Legacy of Alfred Nobel: The Story Behind the Nobel Prizes*, was taken by Ragnar Sohlman, who had become his trusted personal assistant toward the end of his life and was one of two executors of his estate. Sohlman's biography, published in Swedish in 1950 and in English in 1983, is admiring without being worshipful. As its subtitle indicates, it is highly informative about the negotiations—they were difficult, and Sohlman oversaw them—that translated the intentions of Nobel's will into the working reality of the annual prizes. In 1960 Erik Bergengren built on Sohlman's book, and on Nobel's papers and correspondence in the archives of the Nobel Foundation, to produce the first full biography, *Alfred Nobel: The Man and His Work*, which remains the most authoritatively reliable account in English of Nobel's technical and business contributions. Both biographies touched on Nobel's personal life, including his depression, but neither work reached to the inner man.

The two books also dealt cursorily with his relations with Sofie Hess. She was 20 and working in a flower shop in Baden bei Wien when he met her, in 1876, and he consorted with her in various modes for the better part of two decades. When Nobel died, he bequeathed Hess a sizable annuity that she protested was inadequate. Hess possessed 218 letters that Nobel had written to her and threatened to release them unless the estate improved on her legacy. Sohlman cut a shrewd deal: in return for the letters, the estate made a one-time compensation on the understanding that she would never discuss her relationship with Nobel publicly, on penalty of losing the annuity. Kenne Fant has used the letters, which now reside in the Swedish National Archives, and twenty hitherto inaccessible letters from Nobel to his brother Robert, to probe the private man. *Alfred Nobel* first appeared in Swedish in 1991, and is now published here in a translation by Marianne Ruuth that is serviceable enough but is marred in places by clichés, mistaken phrasing and sentences that do not parse.

Fant, a Swedish actor and director, rightly values the private letters for revealing the "undercurrents" in Nobel's life: "his self-absorption, his loneliness and his belief in the absurdity of existence." He also exploits a play, titled *Nemesis*, that Nobel wrote and had published in Paris in the year or so before he died, taking it to be a masked emotional autobiography, a cri de coeur. Unfortunately, Fant's narrative is often confusing, like a badly done film of quick-cuts back and forth in time, and the treatment of technical issues is weak. Nevertheless, he uses the letters to provide a personal portrait of Nobel, and supplies material suggestive of what is crucial in the account of any creative life—the vital

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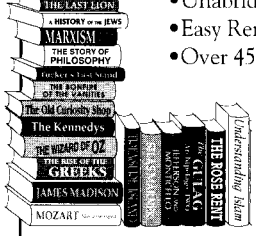

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connection between the man and his work.

Nobel was the son of Immanuel Nobel, himself an architect, builder and talented inventor of building and construction technology. He was a man of erratic fortunes; he went bankrupt in 1833, the year Alfred was born, and later, in 1837, left his family to re-establish himself elsewhere. Winding up in St. Petersburg, he prospered producing military equipment for the Russian government, and expanded into the civilian market with a central heating system that he invented. In 1842, after a five-year separation, he brought his family to Russia, where he employed tutors to educate his sons and enlisted them in the business. His company employed more than 1,000 men in the mid-1850s, but it went bankrupt as a result of a sharp fall-off in military contracts after the disaster of the Crimean War. The sons sent their parents back to Sweden and, salvaging as much of the business as they could, reorganized it as the Brothers Nobel.

Around 1858, while in St. Petersburg, Alfred learned about nitroglycerine, which was a laboratory curiosity at the time, an explosive that no one knew how to detonate in a practical way. Alfred found a promising method—combining gunpowder with the nitroglycerine and lighting the mixture with a fuse. In 1863, back in Stockholm, he improved on that method radically by introducing a small tube containing a tiny quantity of gunpowder—a blasting or percussion cap—into a large volume of nitroglycerine oil. Once ignited, the cap would send a pressure wave through the oil, raising its temperature to the point of ignition. Nobel clearly recognized the effect that the detonating shock wave would have, and in the opinion of blasting experts his invention of the percussion cap was epoch-making in the theory and practice of explosives.

Alfred had written from St. Petersburg about his experiments to his father, who promptly began his own experiments with nitroglycerine, reporting successes that were exaggerated and, in due course, claiming that it was he, not his son, who had thought of using gunpowder as a detonator. Whoever thought of it, Alfred possessed sophisticated chemical knowledge that his father did not, and he was the sole inventor of the blasting cap. This episode, and evidently others like it, apparently made him feel the victim of his father's dominant ego. So Fant suggests, calling attention to a character in *Nemesis* who hates her father out of compassion for her mother and brothers and retains a memory from childhood of wanting to "bite the tyrant." When Alfred returned to Sweden, he reconciled with his father, and the two collaborated in work on nitroglycerine. But when, in 1864, Nobel founded his first nitroglycerine company—the world's first, too, according to Fant—Immanuel, who had recently suffered a stroke, demanded to be its director. "Papa can be terrible when he wants," brother Ludvig wrote to brother Robert; "he could make rocks shake, and I could not stand it for as long as Alfred has."

Nobel's effort to promote his explosive was shadowed by accidental blasts that reaped considerable attention in the press, where he was called "a traveling salesman in death" or a "mass murderer." In New York, in May 1866, Nobel tried to allay the popular fears with a demonstration at a quarry that lighting a match to nitroglycerine oil only made it burn and that the oil would not explode when tossed from a cliff. The demonstrations failed to dissolve the fears, and in July 1866, the United States Congress passed a law restricting the transportation of nitroglycerine. The problem, Nobel knew, inhered in moving the substance around as a liquid, in which state it could become sensitive to shock and temperature. On his return to Sweden, in August, Nobel completed a series of experiments to produce nitroglycerine in a solid form, settling on combining it with *kieselguhr*, a porous earth containing decaying microorganisms that would absorb but not react with it. The resulting nitroglycerine pulp could be shaped into sticks and encased in cartridge paper, ready for insertion into a borehole. Nobel called it "dynamite or Nobel's safety blasting powder."

By 1873 dynamite factories had been established in seventeen cities spread through most of Europe and the United States. (Nobel eventually joined many of them in a trust, to prevent one from competing with the other.) The availability of dynamite enabled construction projects once thought impossible. It was used, for example, to blast the underwater rocks at Hellgate, in New York's East River, to drive through the tunnels on the St. Gotthard railroad line in the Alps and, eventually, to create the cut that became the Panama Canal. All the while Nobel kept working demonically, perfecting his invention in the laboratory and traveling all over the continent to help organize and develop the companies. (Victor Hugo once called him "Europe's richest vagabond.") Beginning in the mid-1870s, he also advised his brothers, Robert and Ludvig, on another business that Robert had begun in Baku, Azerbaijan, to obtain and refine oil. The venture—the "Naptha Production Stock-Company Brothers Nobel," which everyone called "Branobel"—proved

The Hotel Miramar

In the cabana, their hair twisted with brine,
the bride and groom sipped wine from iced tumblers.

Reflecting the moon's rays, her quartz eyes lit up
the volcanic stone dangling from his neck.

Musicians in snowy jackets swayed, their instruments
gleaming, on waves that never rolled to shore.

They played softly, into the wind, but the sound
carried far down the beach, to the village where

brightly colored fish were stuck like bits
of paper in the drift nets hung out to dry.

When a thunderclap broke on the horizon,
all the stars in the sky fell hissing into the sea.

Through the windows of the hotel, instead of
rooms, corridors, and guests, a mountain was visible.

Densely green, with vines that slid up the trees
like snakes, it was blanketed with steam.

Wildcats wrestled on its sheer cliffs.
Birds flew in and out of its waterfalls.

When a pair of these birds glided down
to the beach and coupled in midair,

two cries were heard from the cabana in rapid
succession, followed by a sudden downpour.

Through which the band continued to play
while the stars floated up beneath their feet.

NICHOLAS CHRISTOPHER

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gigantically successful and accounted for a quarter of Alfred's wealth at the time of his death.

In 1873 Nobel bought a small mansion in Paris, on Avenue Malakoff (now Avenue Henri Poincaré). He entertained generously, but he lived a personally spartan life, refraining from dancing, drinking, smoking or extravagance of any sort—except for his liaison with Sofie Hess. He met her just a few months after he had become enamored of an aristocratic Viennese woman, Bertha Kinsky, who came to work for him as a secretary but left within a month to return to Vienna and marry. Hess was Jewish, beautiful, uneducated and, so far as one can tell from Nobel's letters to her—hardly any from her survive—coquettish and demanding.

In due course he installed her in an apartment in Paris not far from the Avenue Malakoff and provided a maid, fine clothes, wines, jewels and a carriage. He hoped to educate her, perhaps even to marry her. He introduced her to his brothers as well as acquaintances; for a time she presented herself as Madame Nobel at the spas she liked to frequent. The relationship may have been intimate—in one letter Nobel chastises her for using his toothbrush—but in most of the correspondence Nobel is avuncular rather than passionate. "You are still a thoughtless child," he wrote to her in 1878, "and it is good for you to have an older, thoughtful uncle to keep watch over you."

So far as Nobel was concerned, Sofie remained thoughtless. She did not take to education, did not learn French and evidently grew impatient in the limbo of the relationship. Nobel told her that he had previously sought an "intimate communion with someone," adding that the next "someone could hardly be a 21-year-old with whose philosophy of life and spirituality I have nothing in common." Nobel suspected her of infidelity, complained that she was selfish, hectored her constantly about her lack of interest in self-improvement and protested that it was "impossible to love someone of whose lack of delicacy one feels ashamed every day, every hour." Hess left Paris in 1884, moving to a small villa that Nobel had purchased for her near Ischl, a health resort (to which Nobel thought he was as likely to make a pilgrimage as he was to "make one to hell"). Yet he was sufficiently bound to her to run errands for her in Paris and to send her money, even after 1890, when she told him that she was pregnant by an Austrian cavalry officer.

Nobel apparently wanted the impossible—a woman whom he could both patronize and respect. The rejection by Bertha Kinsky may have destroyed his confidence—which was none too great to begin with—in his ability to connect with a woman at his own social and cultural level. Fant leaves the issue unexplored, apparently believing that the letters to Sofie Hess speak for themselves; he interrupts the narrative with chapters consisting of excerpts from the letters unaccompanied by any comment. But beyond revealing that Nobel could be resentful, sarcastic and priggish, as well as generous, the letters become tedious with Nobel's complaints. They do not declare their own meaning, except for one that Nobel wrote to Hess in 1884: "My only wish is to devote myself to my profession, to science. I look upon all women—young and old—as disturbing invaders who steal my time."

Nobel went through alternate periods of frenzied devotion to his profession and deep depression, which was marked by chest pains, difficulties in breathing and headaches. Only work relieved the symptoms. Nobel threw himself into science obsessively the way he absorbed himself in the development of the dynamite companies, frequently working fifteen to twenty hours a day, sometimes locking himself alone in the laboratory. One wishes that Fant had done more with his behavioral and psychological evidence to illuminate Nobel the inventor. He appears to have suffered from a kind of manic-depressive anxiety. The lack of a satisfying emotional life may have reinforced his condition. So may the denial of approval from his father, who had made himself into an overbearing competitor rather than a nurturing parent.

Whatever the reason, his inventive drive led him in the 1880s to devise a kind of smokeless powder—he called it "ballistite"—and to interest himself increasingly in the technical side of weaponry, producing improvements in methods of manufacturing, in the firing of rifles and guns, in the power and stability of artillery shells. He claimed that he pursued such projects purely for the technical challenge, distinguishing himself from those who fabricated weapons for profit, the "damage-makers." His sensitivity on this issue was heightened by his reacquaintance, in the late 1880s, with Bertha Kinsky, who had become Bertha von Suttner and was a passionate leader in the organization of European peace congresses. He told her that he would like to invent a weapon so terrible that it would frighten nations into never resorting to war. "My factories will end war quicker than your congresses," she remembered him declaring.

When Nobel's brother Ludvig died in 1888, a French newspaper thought the death was Alfred's and published an obituary characterizing him as "a merchant of death" who had built a fortune by inventing new means to "mutilate and kill." According to Fant, Nobel was deeply pained by the obituary, became obsessed with his posthumous reputation and designed his magnificent bequest so that no one could ever question it. The will, as wills do, revealed the man in the small as well as the large, ensuring that Nobel would not be buried alive by stipulating that his body's arteries be opened and the corpse cremated. Under Ragnar Sohlman's discreet executorship, Alfred Nobel the man was guaranteed dead and his reputation as a benefactor of mankind was secured. Perhaps as a last act for an early love, Nobel's will specified that the qualifications for the Peace Prize include "the establishment and organization of peace congresses," which made it possible for the prize to be awarded in 1905 to Bertha von Suttner.

DANIEL J. KEVLES teaches at the California Institute of Technology. He is the author most recently of *The Code of Codes: Scientific and Social Issues in the Human Genome Project* (Harvard University Press).

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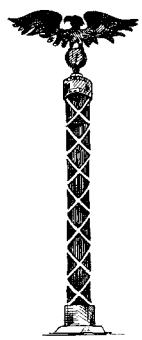
BUCHAREST DIARIST

Hotel hell

I SUPPOSE I SHOULD START BY admitting that I've led a sheltered life, and that the shelter so integral to it has usually been warm and tastefully decorated. After a six-day-long dash through five Eastern European countries, some of which I probably still could not find on one of those maps with national borders but no names—Romania, Moldova, Albania—I appreciate this privilege a little more than I did before, though certainly not as well as I should. I began this trip, on which I accompanied a politically motivated American financier and a few of his staff members, with vague hopes of discovering penetrating truths about human beings who have suffered the worst sorts of political repression. Probably every journalist, however ignorant, when he passes through these places for the first time, feels the impulse to respond with Havelesque aphorisms such as "all power is power over someone" and "the secret of man is the secret of his responsibility." No one wants to be reduced to "Jesus, there's an orange shag rug in my room" or "there's no hot water here!" However . . .

WE SPENT THE FIRST NIGHT AT the Hotel Intercontinental in Bucharest. At a price of about $200 a night—in a place where the rector of a large university earns $70 a month and a bad meal can be had for a quarter—it is itself a small example of how delusions of grandeur have been sustained for decades despite overwhelming evidence of rot. Propped on the wobbly plastic desk in my room when I arrived was a nice letter from hotel management done in an ornate scrawl on fancy stationery. It said, "WELCOME MR. LEONARD SCHWARTZ." Beside it was a brochure that listed the hotel's services. These included a mini bar, a voice mail system, a health club and a nearby National Museum of Fine Arts. The mini bar was empty. The voice mail box was empty, too, though a few hours later I checked it again and a synthesized voice said, "Mr. Caponcelli, please call Mr. Boldini from Italian T.V." It was becoming clear why Schwartz had split. The general theme of the room—precious energy wasted in lip service to Western standards—was amplified in the health club. Most everything in it would be recognizable to viewers of "I Love Lucy" reruns—the medicine ball, the fat-jiggling device—yet most everything looked new. It wasn't. The gleaming stainless steel oars on the period rowing machine disengaged from their locks and came off in my hands. A pedal fell off one charmingly antiquated exercycle; the handlebars came unglued from another; a third simply collapsed into a thousand little pieces when I sat on it. After fifteen minutes the place looked like a junk shop, with bits and pieces of dead machinery strewn across the floor. I do not exaggerate: every piece of equipment was broken. Some devoted curator had gone to a great deal of trouble to keep the machine parts polished and perched delicately in place so that the Hotel Intercontinental health club resembled a brand-new 1950s gymnasium. The health club was, in fact, a museum.



IN THE HOUR I SPENT AT the national museum I was the only visitor; I had the impression I was the first person to pass through in weeks. The paintings were nearly all either prints, fakes or glorious misattributions, completely without the historical interest of the hotel health club. The effect was as if Ceauşescu had said, "Romania requires more of Monet," prompting some panicked hack to snip off the bottom of a poster from the Met—the part that says "The Years at Giverny"—then glue the rest to a wooden frame in the Monet room. More interesting than the pictures were the people who guarded them, as if the act of protection itself might imbue the objects with value. The fifteen middle-aged women whose job it was to make visitors feel unwelcome went into a ferocious version of what is known in basketball as a Box-And-One defense. Fourteen played a zone while the fifteenth tracked me wherever I went; her goal, I believe, was not to keep me from stealing but simply to make me feel faintly suspicious. She succeeded. The paintings quickly became irrelevant as the two of us rushed up and down staircases and dashed in and out of display rooms. A worthy opponent!

CHIŞINAU, IT TURNS OUT, IS THE capital of Moldova. (Moldova, it turns out, is a country.) One enters the darkened lobby of Chişinau's Hotel Cosmos through a tinted glass revolving door. At the end of this personal revolution I found myself in the middle of a dispute between a money changer and a prostitute in a long sable coat. (The prostitute was demanding change for a $100 bill and the money changer suspected the bill was a fake.) The lobby was dotted with fur-lined hookers whom you could barely discern through the haze of cigarette smoke. Now, it should be said, the Hotel Cosmos is only Chişinau's second best and so perhaps makes less of an effort to get the details right. The best hotel in Chişinau, called the Seabeco, was closed, because the owner, who was passing through town, didn't want to be troubled by guests, and so canceled all standing reservations, including ours. The night we arrived it was fifteen below zero. The entire city was without heat or hot water. I could see my breath as I shrieked in my bathroom. It's astonishing how quickly the human body can become extremely uncomfortable. Attempts to sleep through the cold proved futile. The operator in charge of wake-up calls became confused and, hedging her bets, called everyone in the hotel—or at least the members of our party—at 5 a.m., 6 a.m. and 7 a.m. This ensured that we were all more or less indifferent when, at 6:30 a.m., a workman appeared at our doors to repair the locks. Shivering on my back, listening to his hammering and waiting for the ineluctable wake-up call I noticed that the room was decorated entirely in the same stomach-fluid brown as the hotel room in Romania. The bathroom was an even more masterfully disgusting Pepto Bismol pink. In these reflections there was a tiny psychological discovery. Genuine discomfort transforms a shallow aesthetic reaction into a species of stoicism: when you're very cold, very tired and very grimy it suddenly feels slightly brave to complain about the decor.

THE HOTEL DAJTI IN ALBANIA HAD assumed a mythic life in my mind before I saw it. Any hint of displeasure I betrayed in the early part of the trip was met by my fellow travelers with the stock phrase, "wait till you get to Albania." Albania was meant to replace in all but the most ardent journalist the desire to write Havelesque prose with the desire to write a letter of complaint to the Department of Consumer Affairs. At the Dajti, however, we were met by a guide who, while we waited to check in, pointed to a dark cluster of Albanian men in the lobby and said, "You see that guy over there? Five years ago he tried to assassinate the president with a bomb." The end of history! In the raw! Briefly there stirred in me the frozen instinct of curiosity. Really. But, well, what with the rumor that the hot water taps had been removed. . . .

MICHAEL LEWIS

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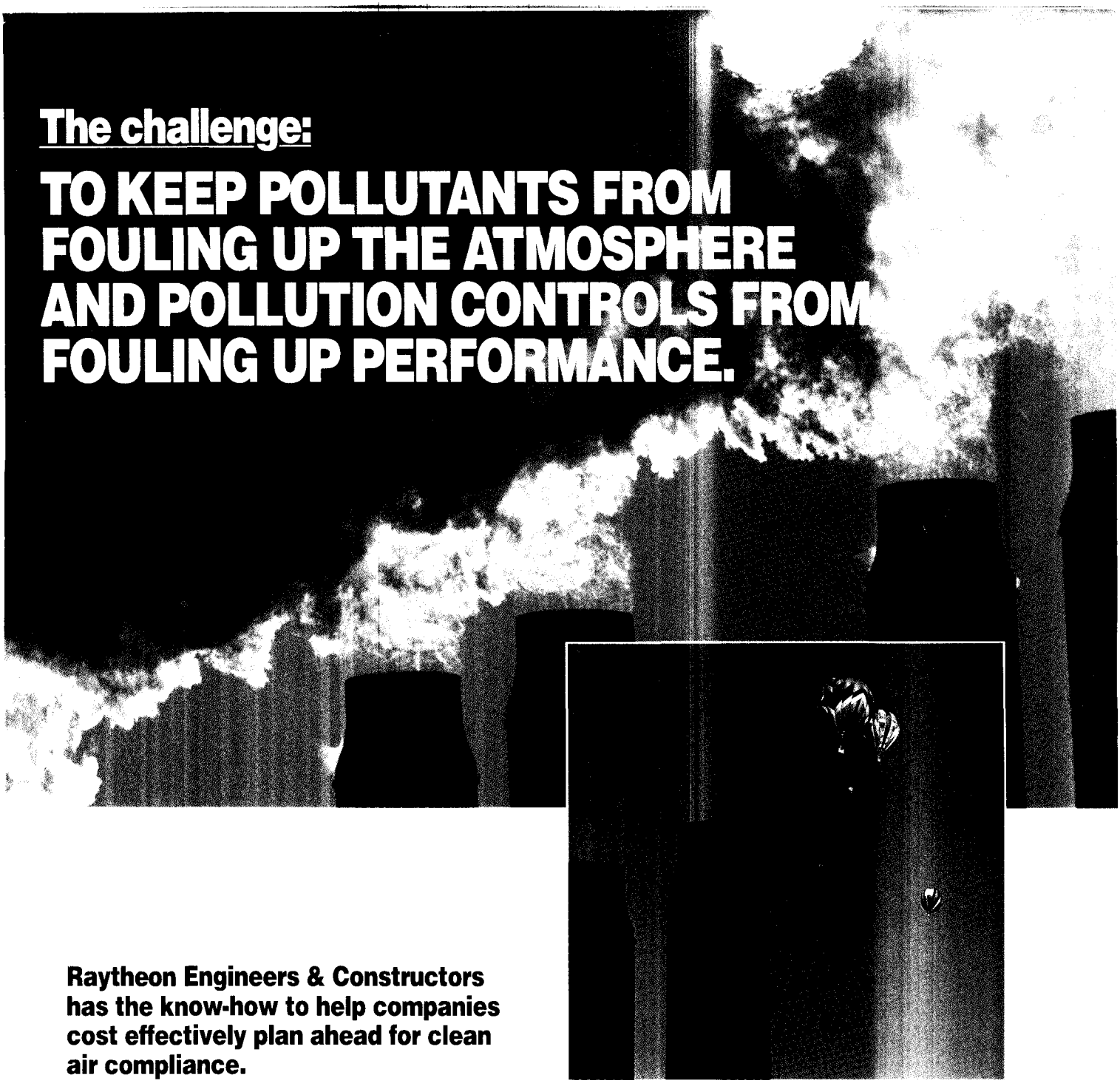

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